

HEALING BALM FOR THE WOUNDED SOUL:
THERAPEUTIC BENEFITS OF LECTIO DIVINA

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BY
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To my best friend and lover of my soul, Rev. Kimberly A. Hellmer.

Kimberly, you have been with me on this journey of life for over 34 years of marriage, two children, two grandchildren, many furry companions, while crossing the span of three continents and eight countries. Through it all you have been at my side every moment without failure. You have taught me to seek God in all things, to love others unconditionally, and trust God at his word. Thank you for being a woman after God's own heart and as a role model for young women and girls across the globe. Thank you for your unwavering love and gracious sacrifice enabling me to fulfill the calling of God upon my life and ministry.

You are a blessing!

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGI	Attachment of God Inventory
BPS-S	Biopsychosocial-spiritual
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIH	Complementary and Integrative Health
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DUREL	Duke University Religion Index
EBTs	Evidence-Based Therapies
E/I	Extraversion/Introversion
GCAG	General Council of the Assemblies of God
IR	Intrinsic Religiosity
J/P	Judging/Perceiving
MBSR	Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
MBTI	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
NORA	Non-Organizational Religious Activity
ORA	Organizational Religious Activity
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RSS Scale	Religious and Spiritual Struggles Scale
S/N	Sensing/Intuition
SWSA	Soul Wound Severity Assessment
T/F	Thinking/Feeling
VHA	Veterans Health Administration

GLOSSARY

Body: The body is the focal point of our presence in the physical and social world.

Church: A group or assembly of persons called together for a particular purpose.

Lectio Divina: A Christian-derived complementary therapy designed for the soul—body, mind, and spirit by monks and nuns around the 3rd and 4th century A.D. Translated from Latin to mean “Divine Reading,” Lectio Divina is an ancient Christian practice of scriptural reading, prayer, meditation, and contemplation to promote communion with God

Liberation: the liberation of any possession, object, or person, usually by payment of a ransom.

Mind: The mind pertains to an individual’s thoughts, feelings, memories, perceptions, and imaginations enabling a person to connect to their physical and social world.

Mindfulness: A Buddhist-derived intervention developed through employing philosophical aspects of the Sanskrit canonical books of Buddhism.

Prayer: Communication with God through thoughts, words, and gestures whereby we express what we believe about God, and our relationship to God and to one another.

Reconciliation: Restoration of friendly relationships and of peace where there had previously been hostility and alienation. Ordinarily, it also includes the removal of the offense that caused the disruption of peace and harmony.

Redemption: The Latin root means to buy back. The meaning expresses the understanding of liberation.

Religion: All types of worship, sacrament, ceremonies, prayer, meditation, traditional observances, etc., by which individuals carry out their religious beliefs or through which they maintain or enhance their relationship with the focus of their religion.

Salvation: The Hebrew verb yasga' holds the meaning as “save” or “deliver” or “salvation.”

Salvation is God’s plan and purpose for offering individuals deliverance from sin and death, ultimately to be reconciled with God.

Sanctification: Is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God.

Soul: The makeup of the human beings regarding three parts: Body (*soma*), Mind, (*psyche*), and Spirit (*pneuma*). The animating and vital principle in man credited with the faculties of thought, action, and emotion and conceived as forming an immaterial entity distinguished from but temporally coexistent with his body.

Soul Wound: A significant life experience produced by a perceived or actual sin from self or others that inflicts injury upon the material or immaterial life force of the individual causing a malformation, and ultimately distancing the individual from God.

Spirit: Essential and activating principle of a person; the will.

Spiritual Formation: The dynamics of shaping the human spirit toward maturity and consonance contemplation: the focused attention of the soul toward the Divine.

Spiritual Maturity: Habitually living with generalized acceptance and frequent living with generalized acceptance and frequent joyfulness on the edge between the structures of expressive certainty on one hand and the overwhelming alarm and anxiety of tragedy on the other, as one daily faces an uncontrollable world.

Spirituality: That which gives an individual as sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in life.

Tai Chi: A Taoist-derived complementary therapy influenced by various Chinese religious and philosophical beliefs around 4th century B.C. Tai Chi, also known as “T'ai-chi ch'uan,” is defined as: “A non-violent martial art in which exercises are used to stabilize the forces of yin and yang and improve overall well-being by easing the internal flow of life energy known as Chi.”

Temperament: The vitality that we inherit in our central nervous system, our hormonal balance and all the other ways in which our body influences our moods, thoughts, and feelings.

Wound: An injury, especially one in which the skin or other external organic surface is torn, pierced, cut, or otherwise broken. An injury to the feelings.

Yoga: A Hindu-derived complementary therapy designed using both spiritual and physical practices around the 6th century B.C. The name yoga is a Sanskrit word meaning “yoke,” and “is applied in a technical sense to an Indian system of religious philosophy aiming at the union of the soul with the Divine Spirit by means of concentration to the exclusion of all sense-perception.

ABSTRACT

Soul wounds negatively affect lives and relationships. This is true for many Christians that have endured a wounding of their soul. In this thesis-project the author will explore wounds of the soul, examine alternative therapies available, and offer a Christian spiritual practice known as *Lectio Divina* for therapeutic benefits and for the promotion of wholeness and well-being. He postulates individuals who practice *Lectio Divina* have the potential to reduce their spiritual-physical-psychological-social wounding by offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in experiencing more fully redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

Christians in the United States seek out complementary and alternative therapies as a source of wholeness and well-being. The concern, a majority of complementary and alternative therapies offered in the medical arena of the United States are of Eastern or Secular Humanistic treatments or practices that are potentially antithetical to some of the principles and ethics within Christianity. To heighten this concern, Christians are offered these potentially controversial treatments by medical facilities without informed disclosure or consent regarding religious roots or influences associated.

Furthermore, Christians are not afforded an opportunity to engage in a complementary or alternative therapy for their wholeness and well-being that aligns more appropriately with their religious beliefs or spiritual practices. Thus, they are not provided the ability to fully employ their religious practices or faith traditions as they prefer. Alternatively, they receive the medical treatments prescribed and participate in a spiritual practice, unbeknownst to them, that is potentially contrary to their spiritual values, moral principles, and ethics beliefs. In some of these situations this can and does more harm than good, resulting in a deepening wound of the soul.

On an impressive note, the largest integrated health care system in the United States is the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) with over 1,298 health care facilities.¹ An integral player in this healthcare system is their Whole Health department. The Whole Health department's mission is centered around individualized health and well-being that include treatments and

¹ US Department of Veterans Affairs. n.d. "Veterans Health Administration." Providing Health Care for Veterans. Accessed November 27, 2022. <https://www.va.gov/health/>.

therapies from a myriad of VHA holistic practices such as professional counseling to medication management to Complementary and Integrative Health (CIH).² These evidence-based therapies (EBTs) have been shown to improve a variety of body, mind, and spirit malformations with marked improved well-being.³

Three of the CIH approaches to be addressed in this thesis-project include: 1) Meditation, 2) Tai Chi, and 3) Yoga.⁴ These CIH approaches identified are considered evidence-based therapies and treatments by the VHA and are offered to individuals as such. The three well-being approaches are unique in that they are derived from ancient Eastern religious or philosophical practices. Meditation is a Buddhist spiritual practice that has therapeutic benefits.⁵ Tai Chi is a Chinese (Taoist) spiritual practice that has shown to have therapeutic benefits.⁶ Yoga is an Indian (Hindu) spiritual practice that also has therapeutic benefits.⁷ In this thesis-project, I propose that

² US Department of Veterans Affairs. n.d. "Whole Health." Complementary and Integrative Health. Accessed November 26, 2022. <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/professional-resources/clinician-tools/cih.asp>.

³ US Department of Veterans Affairs. n.d. "Mental Health." Evidence-Based Therapy. Accessed November 26, 2022. <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/get-help/treatment/ebt.asp#:~:text=Therapy%20at%20VA%201%20Acceptance%20and%20Commitment%20Therapy,Disorders%20%28CBT-SUD%29%208%20Contingency%20Management%20%28CM%29%20More%20items>.

⁴ US Department of Veterans Affairs. "Whole Health." Complementary and Integrative Health.

⁵ US Department of Veterans Affairs. n.d. "Whole Health." Meditation. Accessed November 26, 2022. <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/professional-resources/Meditation.asp>. "Many Veterans desire complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities, both for treatment and for the promotion of wellness... Mindfulness, often translated from Sanskrit to mean "awareness," is an ancient Buddhist concept and, although many different forms and definitions exist, a central aspect of the practice is the intention to be more aware and engaged in the present moment."

⁶ US Department of Veterans Affairs. n.d. "Whole Health." Tai Chi. Accessed November 26, 2022. https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/professional-resources/Tai_Chi.asp. "Tai Chi is a mind-body exercise combining slow-flowing intentional movements with breathing, awareness and visualization. Rooted in the Asian traditions of martial arts, Chinese medicine and philosophy..."

⁷ US Department of Veterans Affairs. n.d. "Whole Health." Yoga. Accessed November 26, 2022. <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/professional-resources/Yoga.asp>. "Yoga is a mind and body practice with origins in ancient Indian philosophy. The various styles of yoga typically combine physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation or relaxation."

Lectio Divina is a Christian spiritual practice that also has therapeutic benefits as gleaned from the coming chapters. Furthermore, *Lectio Divina*, I believe has the potential to be a viable CIH approach for wholeness and well-being as defined by the VHA. The VHA employs CIH practices with therapeutic techniques that include breathing practices, relaxation methods, meditation processes, visualization guidance, and self-awareness. The VHA also seems to use the word “therapy” for practices such as meditation, tai chi, and yoga, yet it is distinctly different in how it is understood and applied with other practices like counseling or medication. Nonetheless, the VHA does utilize therapeutic language with meditation, tai chi, and yoga for individual wholeness and well-being.⁸

Soul Wound

O Lord, don't rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your rage. Have compassion on me, Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony. I am sick at heart. How long, O Lord, until you restore me? Return, O Lord, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love. For the dead do not remember you. Who can praise you from the grave? I am worn out from sobbing. All night I flood my bed with weeping, drenching it with my tears. My vision is blurred by grief; my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies. Go away, all you who do evil, for the Lord has heard my weeping. The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord will answer my prayer. May all my enemies be disgraced and terrified. May they suddenly turn back in shame.

– David the Beloved⁹

All people from every nation, every tribe, and every tongue battle with soul wounds. Every individual is susceptible to a wounding of the soul as no one is immune. Every person on

⁸Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration. Amended July 2, 2021. *VHA Directive 1137(2): Provision of Complementary and Integrative Health*. (Washington, D.C.: 2016), 3-4.

⁹ Tyndale House Publishers. *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Psalm 6:1-10. The New Living Translation (NLT).

earth will eventually experience a soul wound, either from self, others, or what they perceive as from God. What is heartbreaking, many people suffering from a soul wound will live with it for most of their life not knowing there is a healing balm available for their anguish.¹⁰ Despite this reality, some do stumble upon true life-giving healing and wholeness. But for others, they turn to forms of self-treatment hoping to dull the pain, with many finding no sense of relief at all. These individuals in dire need of a healing balm find themselves wondering if their life has any meaning, purpose, or hope. They find themselves asking the ill-fated question: “Is my life worth living?”

So what is a soul wound? How is soul wound defined? How is soul wound used in this context? For my thesis-project, “soul wound” will first be examined as two separate words and then dyadically. With this thesis-project, the word “soul” and the word “spirit” are considered two distinct functions and purposes as supported in Genesis 2:7, Hebrews 4:12, and 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

Soul: “The animating and vital principle in man credited with the faculties of thought, action, and emotion and conceived as forming an immaterial entity distinguished from but temporally coexistent with his body.”¹¹

Wound: “An injury, especially one in which the skin or other external organic surface is torn, pierced, cut, or otherwise broken. An injury to the feelings.”¹²

¹⁰ Henri J. Nouwen. *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. (New York, NY: Crown Publishing Group, 2010), 87-88, 98-99. “Healing” in the context of my thesis-project regards the individual growing in wholeness rather than eliminating the wound.

¹¹ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: New College Edition*. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), 1234.

¹² *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1476.

SOUL: Body, Mind, Spirit

What are the primary components of the soul where people experience wounding? These three components are: body, mind, and spirit. The body in Figure 1 refers to the material or physical structure and substance of a human being. According to Dallas Willard, “The body is the focal point of our presence in the physical and social world.” The mind in Figure 1 refers to the conscious and unconscious processes involving the brain and how the brain directs the mental and physical behaviors to the body. The mind pertains to an individual’s thoughts, feelings, memories, perceptions, and imaginations enabling a person to connect to their physical and social world.¹³ The spirit in Figure 1 refers to the “essential and activating principle of a person; the will.”¹⁴ The spirit exercises the will of the whole person. As defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary* and shown in Figure 1, the soul is central to the body, mind, and spirit of an individual.

As Willard postulated, “The soul is that dimension of the person that interrelates all the other dimensions so that they form one life.”¹⁵ This understanding of soul was illustrated in the Bible where God formed man: body, mind, and spirit. After forming man of body, mind, and spirit, God breathed in the “breath of life” and thereby created the first human soul. “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”¹⁶ This biblical illustration clearly depicts the complete human soul – body, mind, and spirit.

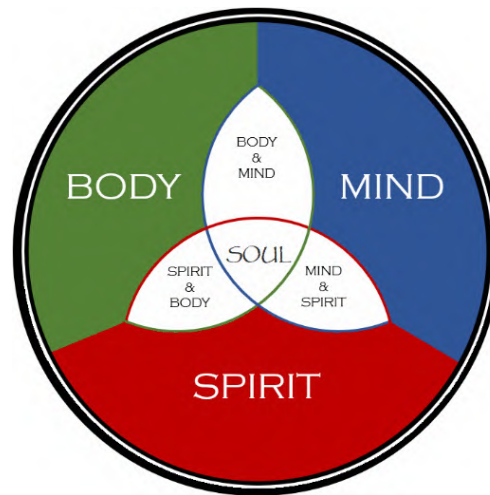
¹³ Dallas Willard. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 32-33.

¹⁴ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1245.

¹⁵ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 37.

¹⁶ *The Holy Bible: King James Version*, Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version. (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2009), Genesis 2:7.

Figure 1. SOUL – Body, Mind, Spirit



Gregg Blanton, a professor of psychology, suggested similarly as Willard that the soul represented the whole person, and the individual's soul primary purpose was to “intermingle the body with the mind, the mind with the heart, and the heart with the body.”¹⁷ Blanton emphasized how vitally dependent each component was with the other two and the three facets could not operate in isolation from the other. What is more, these three functional elements connected the individual with their environment, the inner workings of their mind, and with an ability to interact with the Triune God.¹⁸

WOUND: Spiritual-Physical-Psychological-Social

What areas are the primary domains where people experience soul wounding? There are four environments that individuals relate to and connect with on an intrinsic and extrinsic level:

¹⁷ P. Gregg Blanton. *Contemplation and Counseling: An Integrative Model for Practitioners*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 51. This author prefers to use the word “heart” in place of the word “spirit” as he shared his perspective, “both are interchangeable.”

¹⁸ Blanton, *Contemplation and Counseling*, 52.

spiritual, physical, psychological, and social.¹⁹ Figure 2 illustrates these four environments in which human beings are vulnerable for encountering an affliction: more specifically for this thesis-project, a soul wound.²⁰ This is echoed by Jared Hawkins:

“Systemic thinkers might be especially adept at incorporating BPS-S factors into treatment, because the BPS-S model is, itself, a systemic model of health. Thus, systemic clinicians might naturally see how clients’ biological, psychological, social, and spiritual experiences are systemically affecting and shaping clients’ overall wellness and their relational experiences.”²¹

The spiritual environment in Figure 2 provides the individual’s life with meaning, purpose, and hope.²² Individuals may find meaning, purpose, and hope in several ways to include religion, philosophy, and way of life. What is more, God created humanity as a living soul. There are laws God has put into place that cannot be removed and all individuals are susceptible to these laws for their betterment or detriment.²³

The physical environment in Figure 2 encompasses the material or biological structure and substance referred to here and through the human body. Hawkins asserts, “Within the domain of biology they listed the current health, past health history, and health behaviors

¹⁹ Hawkins, Jared M.; Douglas P. McPhee; Cameron C. Brown. “Contemporary Family Therapy: Incorporating Biopsychosocial Spiritual Resources in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy.” *An International Journal*. Sep 2020, Vol. 42 Issue 3, p217-227. Accessed November 26, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-019-09523-8>. The Biopsychosocial-spiritual model assesses levels of functioning within biological, psychological, social, and spiritual framework in the health-related fields to help better understand human behavior.

²⁰ For this thesis-project spiritual formation and soul are the primary focal points. The term Spiritual-Physical-Psychological-Social model will be used rather than the Bio-Psycho-Social-Spiritual model that is most common in the psychiatric environment.

²¹ Hawkins, “Contemporary Family Therapy,” 219. Biopsychosocial-spiritual (BPS-S).

²² Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 32-33.

²³ The Apostolic Christian. “Understanding the Bio-Psycho-Social-Spiritual Model. A resource from the Counseling and Family Services,” (Morton, IL: Silver Lining, 2016), 1-5.

(including diet, exercise, sleep, and substance use) of clients.”²⁴ This is an area where the individual person’s presence engages the world around them in the spiritual, corporeal, mental, and societal realms. As Willard states, “Equally important, it is the body from which we live.”²⁵

Figure 2. WOUND – Spiritual, Physical, Psychological, Social



The Apostolic Church Counseling and Family Services suggests the physical environment at that of the physical body; however, they see more significantly is the importance and duty of an individual to care for and protect their person.²⁶ The physical arena regards an individual’s body to include physical makeup, metabolism, genetics, and general health. This body has been assigned to the individual at conception and belongs to that person. They have sole control and self-autonomy to do as they please, either good or bad. However, at times in life uncontrollable and unexpected factors do play a role that affects the physical environment of the

²⁴ Hawkins, “Contemporary Family Therapy,” 218.

²⁵ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 35.

²⁶ The Apostolic Christian. “Understanding the Bio-Psycho-Social-Spiritual Model,” 1-5.

human being. Wounds that impact the physical world of an individual's body can and do cause harm with the other environments of the spiritual, psychological, and social aspects.

The psychological environment in Figure 2 regards an individual's invisible part of the mind and how the person thinks, processes, behaves, and expresses emotions in their physical and social world. Hawkins sees this a little bit differently, "Personality, mood, mental health conditions, degree of hope, and stressors were identified as psychological factor."²⁷ However, this environment is critical by enabling an individual to connect to the self, others, and God.

The social environment in Figure 2 regards the visible and invisible community and connectedness of an individual. Willard puts it this way, the social context "...is primarily an ontological matter—matter of being what we are."²⁸ The social environment includes aspects related to peer and family relationships, social supports, cultural traditions, education, employment/job security, socioeconomic status, and societal messages. Hawkins shares, "Within the social domain they identified relationships with family members, friends, and colleagues, as well as broader social experiences like community connections, sociopolitical environment, and culture."²⁹ The social environment regards how people connect to God and connect to others. The Apostolic Church Counseling and Family Services connect this environment with the creation of human beings created in God's image and being in relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They also unveil how relationships are a blessing but can also be painful.³⁰

A soul wound in the most simplistic understanding is an injury to a person. However, that simple definition does not expound upon the breadth and depth, nor the gravity of disorder

²⁷ Hawkins, "Contemporary Family Therapy," 218.

²⁸ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 36-37.

²⁹ Hawkins, "Contemporary Family Therapy," 218-219.

³⁰ The Apostolic Christian. "Understanding the Bio-Psycho-Social-Spiritual Model," 1-5.

and/or malformation attributed to wounding of the soul. So a deeper dive is needed to unpack these two unsuspecting and seemingly trite words. According to the *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* the word “soul” does not designate a part of an individual, but rather the whole person considered from one aspect of its functions. As such, it “represents the life force of the body (cf. Gen 2:7) or the inner life of the person, encompassing desires and emotions.”³¹ According to the *American Heritage College Dictionary* “wound” is defined as an “injury, esp. one in which the skin or another external surface is torn, pierced, cut, or otherwise broken.”³² Again, these two definitions offer some understanding and insight, but do not examine the two words as a dyadic but rather individually. Again, it does not sufficiently offer a coherent unified understanding.

So I developed a robust definition to offer the reader a credible and comprehensive focus for “soul wound” since no evidence-based research studies were found proposing one. Furthermore, to ensure a consistent application is applied and to establish a common terminology for this thesis-project, the exhaustive definition for “soul wound” is: A significant life experience produced by a perceived or actual sin from self or others that inflicts injury upon the material or immaterial life force of the individual causing a malformation, and ultimately distancing the individual from God.³³ A wounding of the soul is caused when a life experience of an individual is perceived as a negative encounter or circumstance which then causes the individual to move away from their belief and/or relationship in the Triune God. Spiritual grief, physical injury, emotional distress, and social abandonment are a few contextual examples that have contributed

³¹ Allen C. Myers. *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 964.

³² Margery S. Berube. *The American Heritage College Dictionary 4th Edition*. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 1581.

³³ Life experience environments: spiritual, physical, psychological, and social. Material or immaterial life force: soul; body, mind, and spirit.

to developing individual soul wounds.

The Christian Spiritual Journey

The Christian Bible, the Old Testament and New Testament, depicts numerous laments of individuals that grappled with soul wounds either from self, others, or that they perceived from God. Adam and Eve battled with a soul wound in the garden.³⁴ Cain battled with a soul wound before and after he killed his brother, Abel.³⁵ Ham battled with a soul wound after shaming his father, Noah.³⁶ Abram and Lot, Jacob and Esau, King David, Peter, Saul, and on and on all encountered and battled with soul wounds. As one can see, the Bible depicts clearly how soul wounds have been a part of the human spiritual journey since “the Fall” in the Garden of Eden. No human being can expect to go through life and not experience a deepening of a soul wound.

In my personal life story I have endured a myriad of soul wounds that I received from myself, from others, and some I perceived from God. As a child I attended church with my parents and siblings. At the age of eight I took St. Noah Patron Saint as my confirmation name and was confirmed by the church. During that same time I felt a calling to go into the priesthood; I truly felt connected with God. However, life for me in 1976 drastically changed. During this difficult period in my life, I journeyed down a spiritually dark, dreary, and dreadful path. It was during this time I experienced verbal abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. I could not understand why God allowed such debased things to happen to me. So I believed the lie that I was not worth anything to God but only to be tossed into the trash heap of the world.

³⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles/Good News Publishers, 2002), Genesis 3. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are to the English Standard Version (ESV).

³⁵ Genesis 4.

³⁶ Genesis 9.

For years I had traveled with wounds of the soul wherever I went, carrying these wounds on my back like a heavy backpack not knowing how to get rid of these wearisome and life-killing burdens. These soul wounds of mine caused me great pain, fear, shame, anger, internally and externally, which adversely impacted my life spiritually, physically, psychologically, and socially. The soul wounds in my life ultimately created a Grand Canyon relationship between me and God, and for a time I gave up on myself, others, and God. I found myself not knowing exactly how to deal with my own soul wounds and so I floundered in my spiritual journey. As more and more soul wounds were experienced, I buried them and then over time I developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), severe anxiety, fear, and psychogenic pain causing a greater barrier in my normal day-to-day routine of life, forming a greater wedge of estrangement with God. This narrative of mine has opened my eyes to seeing other individuals in a similar light.

As a Clinical Chaplain I have had the privilege and opportunity to provide spiritual care and pastoral support to hundreds of people on an annual basis. These people come from every walk of life, age, gender, race, nation, and disability, both civilian and military. I have heard first-hand laments of individuals with heart-wrenching tragic wounds of the soul who never recovered from their injuries. Individuals carrying visible and invisible soul wounds searching for the healing balm to soothe their acute and chronic pain.³⁷ For this very reason I have chosen this thesis-project in hopes of offering them a tried-and-true Christian therapeutic spiritual practice—*Lectio Divina*. The examples in this thesis-project are fictional composites based on the author's clinical experiences with hundreds of patients through the years. I share four

³⁷Blanton, *Contemplation and Counseling*, 189. Blanton with reference to "well-being" quotes John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." My reference is the same with regards to the word "healing balm." Healing refers to ones growth in wholeness and well-being not the elimination of the wound.

poignant laments of individual stories carrying soul wounds.³⁸

William Murry was a 71-year-old gentleman who grew-up attending a Pentecostal church on the East Coast from the time of his birth. William was a highly active youth in his church during his adolescence. At the young age of 12, William had an encounter with God that was so profound in his life that he dedicated his life to the ministry and for the next six years he prepared for his calling to be an evangelist. But then on his 18th birthday, rather than heading off to Bible College, William was drafted into the Army and was soon carted off to the Vietnam War. William found himself in the middle of the Tet Offensive of 1968, known as the bloodiest of times, with the killing of 246 American personnel including William's platoon. He, however, was the sole survivor. When he returned from the war just two years later, his life was never the same. Today William has nothing to do with church and in fact is a professing Atheist. His motto: "If there was a God, Vietnam would have never of happened." Soul Wound Assessment: Core injuries are PTSD, anger towards God, survivor's guilt, shame, loss of purpose and meaning, and self-loathing.

Annie O'Brien was a 45-year-old woman who grew-up in a Protestant church in the Midwest. Her parents were not church goers but agreed to pick her up and drop her off. Annie was an active teen in her youth group and felt connected to God in a deep passionate intimate relation. Annie wholeheartedly loved Jesus and at age 16 she started thinking about becoming a missionary to Africa. Her youth pastor took notice of her and encouraged her to pursue her passion of reaching children for Christ. Annie and her youth pastor become remarkably close over the next school year. She soon found herself pregnant by her youth pastor and was eventually exiled by the church community for her sexual promiscuity and adultery. Not having

³⁸ Four poignant laments: All names have been changed and any resemblance between these fictional characters and actual persons is coincidental.

parents involved in the church, Annie did not know where to turn for help. Annie never was able to understand why the Church did not come to her aid, nor could she understand “why God allowed this to happen.” Annie still believed in something, a greater power, and has turned away from the Christian God. Soul Wound Assessment: Core injuries are PTSD, sexual-trauma, lack of trust, self-blame, self-isolation, shame, guilt, and estrangement of family.

Eugene and Beth Kurschner were a married couple in their early sixties, they were married to each other for 37 years, had been Christians for 33 years, served as ushers at their Evangelical church, and worked with the church board on special projects. However, they lamented that “things seemed to have changed” in their church and they did not like where leadership was heading. Both Eugene and Beth felt the pastoral leadership ignored them and left them out of the new church remodeling project. They shared feelings of offense, disrespect, and a lack of appreciation for their support. Eugene and Beth perceived this treatment had been going on for over six months and they were tired of it. So Eugene and Beth left the church in search of another that would respect them and appreciate their support. In the meantime, they held church at home with just the two of them. Soul Wound Assessment: Core injuries are perceived wrongdoing by church. Both are dealing with pride, narcissism, false self, and ego.

Johnny Pedersen was a 38-year-old man who grew up in a West Coast metropolis. He was a very bright and successful Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for a modest insurance company: a self-made man. At the age of 12 his mother died suddenly from ovarian cancer that was not detected until the last stage. This took him and his father by surprise and felt so wrong on every level. His father was a blue-collar worker who woke early, worked late, and buried himself in work as a way of coping with his grief. Johnny, for the major portion of his adolescent years, raised himself. After the death of his mother, Johnny felt abandoned by his mother, and

later by his father. Now into his late 30's, Johnny saw himself as a very successful businessman and believed that his success was accomplished by his self-motivation and drivenness. Johnny has nothing to do with God as "God had nothing to do" with him. Johnny only saw abandonment from his mother and father, and blamed the medical facility for killing his mother with cancer. "I can take care of myself, thank you." Soul Wound Assessment: Core injuries are perceived abandonment by God, abandonment by parents, anger, bitterness, loneliness, and self-dependency.

As illustrated by these personal stories of human experience, it is plain to see the destruction of soul wounds on a human being. These life experiences inflict injury and wound the soul of the individual leaving the person in anguish. Whether these individuals perceived the wounding as sin is real or imagined, it moved the individual away from God and ultimately caused a distancing from God. Again, this has caused great concern for me; hence, why this thesis-project.

Individual Temperament

God's Word is very clear: all human beings are created in his image, and all are uniquely gifted for his purpose—no two individuals are alike.³⁹ The creation of humanity is paramount to understanding where and how human beings fit into God's overall plan and agenda in life. Each person has an exclusive purpose in the Triune God's planning and motive. Pursuing God is instrumental for each person to learn what that plan entails. For starters, understanding where one comes from is crucial to understanding where one is going. To learn the origin of mankind or to learn about how to care for creation one must turn to "the general revelation of God" or "the

³⁹ Genesis 1, 2; Psalm 139; Jeremiah 1, and 29.

special revelation of God.” These two revelations of God are paramount with understanding human temperament. General revelation informs human beings of God’s plan and purposes through nature, history, and conscience. Whereas special revelation informs human beings of God’s plan and purposes through Scripture, miracles, prophecy, and personal experience.⁴⁰ One thing that is common to all humans regards how to connect with God. God’s primary interaction with humanity is through general revelation, special revelation, and prayer. But what makes each person’s interaction with God different relates to the individual’s personal temperament.

Temperament is unique to each person and how that person is compelled to seek God through prayer and worship. It really all depends on how God created them. However, some authors you read offer a different take on the word “temperament.” Houston defines temperament as: “The vitality that we inherit in our central nervous system, our hormonal balance and all the other ways in which our body influences our moods, thoughts, and feelings.”⁴¹ Michael and Norrissey in their book, *Prayer and Temperament*, defined temperament as: “The characteristic or habitual inclination of a person to choose an attitude or one function rather than another as their customary behavior.”⁴² One view is from a body perspective, and the other view is from a mind perspective. As demonstrated by Figure 1, all three components of the soul (body, mind, spirit) interact with each other and affect each other in some form or fashion. So, with each view both definitions are plausible despite the different perspectives. All authors share a common viewpoint that a person’s temperament defines how that person connects with

⁴⁰ Henry Thiessen. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 7-16.

⁴¹ James M. Houston. *The Transforming Power of Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship with God*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1996), 133.

⁴² Chester P Michael and Marie C. Norrissey. *Prayer and Temperament: Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality Types*. (Richmond, VA: Byrd Press, 1984), 184.

God. Another way of looking at it is the person's prayer life is a direct reflection of their temperament.⁴³ Unlocking one's temperament should positively help a person connect to God as God designed.

Another area worth exploring deals with the individual life which holds deep roots of social and historical information. Humanity is made up of men and women from many different cultures and nations, living throughout the planet experiencing an individual life different from any other. This includes how one sees and explores the planet with the five human senses: seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting. The homeland people family legacies have been ingrained in their personhood. Language, food, music, art, and religion developed in their home of origin are all part of who they are. This is what informed and formed the person from the moment they were born. These life experiences have been researched and categorized over many centuries. In the 1920s, Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst developed Psychological Types.

Jung developed his ideas about personality type in an effort to explain the normal, natural differences between healthy people. Based on his observations, Jung concluded that differences in attitudes and behaviors result from the natural tendencies people have to use their minds in different ways. As people act on their natural tendencies, they develop corresponding patterns of behavior that they find satisfying and fulfilling. Jung's personality type theory defines eight different patterns of behavior, which he called *types* and he provided a detailed description of how they developed.

– Isabel Briggs Myers⁴⁴

⁴³ Houston. *The Transforming Power of Prayer*, 133-134. Michael and Norrissey, *Prayer and Temperament*, 11-20.

⁴⁴ Isabel Briggs Myers. *Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type: Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type Series*. 7th Ed. (The Myers-Briggs Company, 2015), 2.

Katharine Briggs and her daughter Isabel Myers expanded the Psychological Types by developing a scale to measure said types.⁴⁵ Today there are four pairs of preferences of human behavior called temperaments, and with the four pairs of preferences come sixteen personality types (see Figure 3).⁴⁶ Each combination of letters indicates a different preference/temperament for a total of 16 different personality types. With the finding of personality types, the good news is that Michael and Norrissey believe that they have uncovered an incredible discovery. It seems there is at least one Christian spiritual practice that offers individuals of different personality types a complementary and alternative therapy that aligns with their morals and values. This offers the individual a source of health and well-being. The Christian spiritual practice is *Lectio Divina*, which is believed to be a suitable spiritual practice for all sixteen different personality temperament types.⁴⁷ Again, regardless of everyone’s personalities, giftings, and talents, *Lectio Divina* is at least one Christian spiritual practice where individuals can practice and potentially find ultimate redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.

Figure 3. The Four Myers-Briggs Preference Pairs



⁴⁵ MBTI Certification Program Participant’s Resource. (The Myers-Briggs Company Limited, 2018), 3-5.

⁴⁶ Michael and Norrissey, *Prayer and Temperament*, 12. Michael and Norrissey interchange the term “temperament” and the term “personality type” as one and the same.

⁴⁷ Michael and Norrissey, *Prayer and Temperament*, 31.

Spiritual Growth

The nature of water is soft, that of stone is hard; but if a bottle is hung above the stone, allowing the water to fall drop by drop, it wears away the stone. So it is with the word of God; it is soft and our heart is hard, but the man who hears the word of God often, opens his heart to the fear of God.

– Abba Poemen the Great ⁴⁸

Spiritual maturity must be a goal of all Christian believers. If Jesus expects to use his followers to reach those who are not Christian, then it behooves Christians to grow in the ways of God. One grows in God by developing holy habits or creating rules of life to live by. Humility is a must to turn one's will over to God. This is an act of obedience and "the chief act of will is not effort but consent."⁴⁹ As Jesus reminds his followers the night he was betrayed, "not my will, but yours, be done" referring to the Heavenly Father's will for his crucifixion.⁵⁰ To lay down one's will and allow God's will to direct them is Christlike. By creating holy habits or rules of life, practice becomes the exercise, but the focus on God and becoming more like Christ is the purpose. On a cautionary note regarding holy habits, when these holy habits or rules of life become mindless routines of empty ritual then they have lost their purpose. Houston states, "Habits are important for building character. But when they become unthinking and automatic, they can have a deadening effect upon our whole lives."⁵¹ Maintaining a balance while consistently practicing the faith is key to spiritual growth, not to mention God is looking for a relationship not an acquaintanceship.

⁴⁸ Poemen. *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers; The Alphabetical Collection*. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1975), 162, 182.

⁴⁹ P. Gregg Blanton. *Contemplation and Counseling: An Integrative Model for Practitioners*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 20.

⁵⁰ Mark 14:36, 26:38; Luke 22:42; and John 6:38.

⁵¹ Houston, *The Transforming Power of Prayer*, 39.

Healing Balm

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

– John the Beloved One⁵²

The Triune God is the Creator of all things, who gives humanity breath and life. Jesus Christ, God in the flesh is the Living Word and the spiritual-physical-psycho-social healing balm for all of humanity. Hence, Scripture is foundational for human beings living a healthy, thriving, and fulfilled lifestyle. However, one's worldview of the Bible will be a determining factor as to how one puts it into practice. If a person views the Bible as God's Truth and a standard for living it will be followed much differently than a person that views the Bible as a practical self-help book with a neat storyline. Another concern to take into consideration regards how people perceive Scripture. Some questions people wrestle with relate to what Scriptures should be taken as descriptive and what should be taken as prescriptive. The response will determine the spiritual practice. Nevertheless, the primary purpose for God's Word is to bring the reader into the presence of God in hopes of encountering the living Word of God: The Living Savior and Lord, Jesus the Messiah.⁵³ With Jesus all can live a hope-filled abundant life amidst the wounds.

⁵² John 1:1-5.

⁵³ The following Scriptures are instrumental for health and well-being with regards to one's perspective regarding application of the Bible to one's life. These Scriptures listed below will be examined in Chapter 2.

Proverbs 4:20-22: My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh.

Exodus 15:25b-26: There the Lord made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer."

The Ministry Setting

There are two ministry settings within the theme and issue that I will address. The first ministry setting is in a Medical Facility in the Northeast United States. I have the privilege of caring for United States Military Veteran patients and family members that come from a myriad of spiritual walks: Agnostic, Anglican, Atheist, Baptist, Buddhist, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, General Protestant, Jewish, Lutheran, Methodist, Muslim, Native American, None, Norse, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Unitarian Universalist, and Wiccan to name a few. The second ministry setting is a non-profit parachurch organization, Transformational Living. Although located in the Northeast United States, individuals that I have provided support for have been from all over the world. In this setting, most clients I offered spiritual and pastoral care to identify as either Christian or of a faith within the Christian belief system.⁵⁴

So what do all these people of different faith practices, nations, tribes, and tongues have in common? All have experienced at least one soul wound or more. Those I met shared stories of traumatic and catastrophic events that they felt they could not get out of their mind and caused them unimaginable physical and psychogenic pain, leaving them feeling life was meaningless, purposeless, and hopeless. Ultimately, these same people reported feeling distant from God. My initial strategy to try to explore how to address soul wounds was to put together a pilot-project in the Medical Facility working with military Veteran patients willing to participate after the initial

Isaiah 53:4-5: Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Matthew 11:28-29: Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

⁵⁴ The list of religious / spiritual practices is based on how the patient self-identifies and the listing is not all inclusive but represents the majority I have provided care for.

assessment. The second plan, if the first was denied, was to reach out to churches that were affiliated with Transformational Living, to schedule a pilot-project at churches from a population of volunteer participants after the initial screening. The third and final plan was to hold a pilot-project with church affiliation with Transformational Living, utilizing an online virtual platform. I was given the green light at the Medical Facility to conduct this research project, so I started to rollout the prepared program when out of nowhere came COVID-19. COVID-19 hit the United States and closed the Medical Facility down to all outpatient care including research groups and complementary therapy programs.

In addition to the Medical Facility restricting outpatient care, the Churches too were prevented from holding in-person services. Therefore, the only perceived and feasible method to conduct a research project was to offer the program virtually online. Through Transformational Living, I advertised the pilot research project with a general introduction and the specific population I was looking for regarding soul wounds. I was able to conduct initial screenings for appropriate subjects, perform an assessment, have them complete the surveys and eventually offer a program addressing the problem of soul wounds upon which this thesis-project is based.

But not so fast. During the months of the COVID-19 outbreak around January – February 2020 timeframe, the Medical Facility was highly perplexed about the medical staff workload, stressful working conditions, long hours wearing personal protection equipment (PPE), and a high surge potential with patients needing ventilators. To combat this concern, leadership within the medical arena promoted Whole Health practitioners to offer daily or weekly VHA-approved complementary and integrative health services. The primary complementary therapies offered were meditation, tai chi, and yoga in hopes of encouraging self-care while reducing stress,

anxiety, and burnout.⁵⁵ It was during that time I put together a daily Monday through Friday fifteen-minute *Lectio Divina* session offered to the medical facility staff throughout the United States. An organic Christian complementary therapy was about to take shape.

Transformational Living is a Christian faith-based parachurch organization with a mission to offer sacred opportunities for spiritual transformation of individuals and groups. With Transformational Living, I offer spiritual direction, spiritual life coaching, group and individual *Lectio Divina*, retreat activities, and soul care and soul repair, all from a Christian biblical foundational approach. With Transformational Living I have had the privilege of working with Christians and United States Military Veterans from a variety of faith practices: Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterianism, and Roman Catholic.

Lectio Divina

For self-care, getting into the Bible and developing a reading plan was essential in helping me heal; that is growing in wholeness and well-being with regards to suffering and wounds of the soul. Since Scripture was helpful in my soul wound healing (overcoming of strongholds), I postulated that Scripture would be helpful in soothing the wounded souls of others. During time in my Doctor of Ministry I was exposed to *Lectio Divina* (Sacred Reading) and taught how to practice it. I found this also greatly beneficial for a more intentional and direct targeting of Scripture to address specific soul wounds with a more effective therapeutic practice. *Lectio Divina* seems to be an effective initial ointment application for individuals battling wounds of the soul. If people of every nation, tribe, and tongue practiced *Lectio Divina* on a

⁵⁵ US Department of Veterans Affairs. "Whole Health." Complementary and Integrative Health.

routine basis they should have the potential to find a life of meaning, purpose, and hope ushering them into the presence of the Triune God, offering them wholeness and well-being.

Hypothesis

Christians in America desire a complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities, both for treatment and for the promotion of health and wellness. If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing *Lectio Divina* has the potential to reduce spiritual-physical-psychological-social wounding by offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in experiencing more fully redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.

Research Questions

How does a soul wound create obstacles that impede a vital and vibrant attachment with the Triune God? What, if any, remedy is there to mitigate these obstacles and offer a healing balm to soothe the soul wound?

Thesis-Project

I postulate that if an individual is struggling with anxiety, anger, fear, loneliness, meaninglessness, hopelessness, sadness, shame, stress, pain, or distress, practicing *Lectio Divina* will reduce these struggles and provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope.

Research Study

The purpose of this research study is to offer participants struggling or grappling with anxiety, anger, fear, loneliness, meaninglessness, hopelessness, sadness, shame, stress, pain, or

distress, an opportunity for reducing symptoms listed above by providing a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope through learning and practicing the art of *Lectio Divina*. Moreover, it has been noticed individuals desire complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities, both for treatment and for the promotion of wellness. *Lectio Divina* can be seen as a Christian spiritual practice with therapeutic benefits.

Conclusion

Each person has a soul that consists of the body, mind, and spirit. These components of the soul are where people experience wounding. As defined earlier, a “soul wound” is a significant life experience produced by a perceived or actual sin from self or others that inflicts injury upon the material or immaterial life force of the individual causing a malformation, and ultimately distancing the individual from God. When one component of the soul is impacted, the other two components are affected. How these three components correspond and react with the other is different for everyone—for no two people are alike. Each person engages the world around them through four general environments that consists of the spiritual, physical, psychological, and social. It is in these environments people encounter wounding of the soul. Likewise, how the individual encounters the four environments are different for all. Nonetheless, when the soul receives appropriate complementary and alternative therapies within a healthy environment, the individual is better served holistically.

Chapter One - Five Layout

Chapter 1 addressed the problem of soul wounds and a lack of Christian complementary and alternative therapeutic practices within the medical field. It identified and defined “soul

wound” and examined different types of spiritual malformation that impact humanity. This chapter also identified and analyzed personality types associated with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment and proposed a prospective spiritual practice with potential therapeutic benefits known as *Lectio Divina*.

Chapter 2 will address the theological framework and the foundation for personal spiritual formation. Without a strong theological framework to address the problem identified in Chapter 1, the foundation in Chapter 2 will not stand. So to ensure a strong foundation, sacred Scripture will be used to shed light upon the biblical themes to strengthen the framework: Trinity, sin, and Scripture—redemption, salvation, reconciliation, and sanctification. Then a shift will take place to explore and address the theological foundation for spiritual formation: Divina Law, discipleship, spiritual practices—Scripture, prayer, worship, evangelism.

Chapter 3, through a literature review, will analyze topics on malformation of the soul to include soul wound, God attachment theory, temperaments, personality types, and *Lectio Divina*—Scripture, meditation, prayer, contemplation, and journaling. Literature that includes books written by Eugene Peterson, Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, Michael Casey, M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., Christine Valters Painter, and Richard Peace.

Chapter 4 will examine the two research projects: Project 1: Healing Balm for the Soul Wound, and Project 2: *Lectio Divina* – Connecting and Growing with God. Both studies will investigate Christians who are struggling with soul wounds from a myriad of different malformations. In this exploration will Christians overcome their ailments through practicing the Christian spiritual complementary and alternative therapy of *Lectio Divina*?

Project 1 will include completing a pre and posttest, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) *Global Step I* assessment and attending and participating in a course on *Lectio Divina*. A

total of eight Christian volunteer participants will join in this seven-day journey. Project 2 will include daily 15-minute *Lectio Divina* sessions, Monday – Friday, of a timespan from March 2019 – May 2022, that includes 330 active members, 37 average daily participates, and 25 individuals completing an assessment regarding general *Lectio Divina* practices, soul wound assessment, and *Lectio Divina* as a complementary therapy. Project 1 is considered a more formal setting while Project 2 is considered more of an organic development. Both projects offer solid qualitative and quantitative data about the healing power of the Living Word of God.

Chapter 5 will extrapolate the data collected from the measurements taken by all eight participants in Project 1, and 25 volunteer participants in Project 2. Measurements used for this thesis-project includes: 1) MBTI *Global Step I*; 2) Demographics Inventory; 3) General *Lectio Divina* Practice Survey; 4) The Religious and Spiritual Struggles Scale; 5) Duke University Religion Index; 6) The Attachment of God Inventory; 7) Participate Daily Reflective Journal, 8) *Lectio Divina* as a Complementary Therapy Survey, and 9) Open forum for comments. The measurements were used to gather the necessary data to conduct a qualitative and quantitative evidence-based thesis-project.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Biblical Introduction

In Chapter 1, the need was established for Christians to have access to suitable complementary and alternative therapeutic options for their health and well-being. Furthermore, a “soul wound” was identified and defined to bring clarity for the individual battle. *Lectio Divina* was proposed as a Christian spiritual practice with potential therapeutic advantages. In this chapter, the Holy Scripture will be examined to identify and illustrate healthy Christian spiritual practices with potential therapeutic benefits. These Christian spiritual practices include: 1) *Lectio Divina*, 2) the Rule of Life, and 3) Examen Journal.

The Triune God

For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

– **The Prophet Jeremiah**¹

Before the beginning of time, space, and matter—God was. For God does not have a beginning nor an ending for he always is and always will be. In the Holy Bible, the Old and New Testaments, God is clearly depicted as the Triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. From the creation story starting in the book of Genesis, the Triune God created

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Jeremiah 29:11-13. The New Living Translation (NLT).

all things in the Heavens and all things on the Earth.² In this miraculous masterpiece of creation, there is an artistic relationship within the personhood of God: The Father is depicted as looking over the face of the deep, the Son is spoken forth with power full of life, while the Holy Spirit is described hovering over the face of the waters. God, Three-In-One, established the cosmos in unified perfection and harmony capturing the most perfect relationship of all—for God is a God of relationship.³

A pivotal moment in the creation story demonstrated another important creation work of the Triune God. That is, the creation of human beings. Here, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit intimately created, shaped, molded, and breathed the breath of life into humanity, both male and female. God did not just create man like any other creation, rather God created humanity in his image and blessed them.⁴ So God created humanity; both male and female, and they became one, projecting a complete image of the Triune God. In this visualization, intimacy is up front and center stage for all to see. Nothing was done in secret. The plan for human creation was designed with intent, and purpose, and arranged by God to include all of mankind, not a single person was left out—past, present, or future. The creation affair was established and cultivated out the of unconditional covenantal love of the Father. When people reject His love, they are left to their own devices unable to comprehend their true self-identity,

² Karen Dockrey, Johnnie Godwin, and Phyllis Godwin. *The Student Bible Dictionary: A Complete Learning System to Help You Understand Words, People, Places, and Events of the Bible*. (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, 2000), 234. The word Trinity is not found in the Bible; however, references to the Godhead as Trinity are. Trinity, as defined by the *Student Bible Dictionary*: People's way of referring to the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit. See the following references: Matthew 28:19, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; Matthew 3:16-17.

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles/Good News Publishers, 2002), Genesis 1:1-3 and John 1:1-5. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are to the English Standard Version (ESV).

⁴ Genesis 1:26-28.

meaning in life, or spiritual design and purpose.⁵

God's desire from the very beginning of time was to be in communion and fellowship with his creation, particularly his people. God walked daily in the garden with Adam and Eve offering them his intimacy, communion, and friendship. This was God's desire, and his hopes were for humanity to reciprocate back. He did that by intentionally creating humans with freewill and the ability make their own choices. He knew the end results before it happened, nonetheless he gave humanity self-autonomy. So unless the people sought after God for his plan for their lives, they find themselves searching on their own for a life of meaning, purpose, and hope.

The problem, all people have wounds of the soul (body, mind, and spirit) that deepen the barrier between them and God, offering them little to no hope. Eventually this leaves them captive to their addictions and feelings of isolation and loneliness.⁶ That is a very dark place to be, howbeit, God leaves that decision to each person as an individual, allowing human beings freewill to make personal choices. His will for all of humanity is to have a loving intimate relationship with Him. God is love; "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."⁷ When people put their faith in his Son, Jesus Christ, the relationship is restored and fellowship with him is renewed. Humanity will finally find real lifegiving meaning, purpose, and hope—

⁵ Genesis 2:7, 18-25.

⁶ Nouwen, Henri J. *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. (New York, NY: Crown Publishing Group, 2010), 55-64, 89-90.

⁷ John 3:16-17.

True spiritual transformational living and the healing balm for life's wounded soul.⁸

The Fall of Humanity

What are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority—the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents.

– David the Beloved⁹

From the beginning of time man and woman held a deep intimate communal relationship with the Triune God. Adam and Eve enjoyed basking in God's daily presence. God also lovingly incorporated Adam and Eve with the creation work by making them caretakers of his world. As Mark Buchanan pointed out in his book *The Rest of God*, Adam and Eve were brought together for a specific reason, "to work it and take care of it."¹⁰ This inclusion truly highlighted the romance of God with humanity as a literal match made in the heavenlies. So why did Adam and Eve turn their back on God? Where did things all go wrong?

In the Old Testament beginning with Genesis Chapter 1, God is portrayed as the Creator of the heavens and the earth.¹¹ As the narrative continues to unfold in Chapter 1, the Triune God created humanity, "male and female."¹² This overview of Creation, specifically the creation of

⁸ "Soul" as defined in Chapter 1 involves the makeup of an individual – body, mind, and spirit. "Healing" as expressed with understanding to imply an individual growing in wholeness and well-being and not the elimination of the wound.

⁹ Psalm 8:4-8 (NLT).

¹⁰ Mark Buchanan. *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath*. (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2006), 14.

¹¹ Genesis 1:1.

¹² Genesis 1:26-27.

humanity, is a phenomenal and awe-inspiring miracle of God that no human has been able to wrap their mind around. The creation of humanity is another spectacular miracle explained in detail by the next chapter, Genesis Chapter 2. Here God is depicted forming the man out of the dust of the ground. When God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, the man became a living creature.”¹³ That is when man became a living soul: body, mind, and spirit. A little time later, God then caused the man to sleep in order to take a rib from man to create woman. From there man and woman were joined together as husband and wife.¹⁴

Adam and Eve were the first embodied beings God created with an eternal soul. They walked with the Triune God, talked with him, worked with him, and communed with him every day. Adam and Eve tasted God’s goodness, beheld his glory, marveled at his majesty, and more importantly were showered in his love.¹⁵ God entrusted them to his garden, the Garden of Eden, and he lavished this precious couple with his agápē love.¹⁶ As Peterson rightfully asserted, Adam and Eve were bountifully cared for by God and they trusted him for everything.¹⁷ God’s unconditional and unfailing love for his creation is exponentially unexplainable by words alone. Devastatingly however, Adam and Eve’s relationship with the Triune God would soon change the world’s salvific trajectory forever.

Genesis Chapter 3, referred to as “The Fall” explained exactly what took place in the Garden of Eden that fractured the relationship between God and his creation; more specifically,

¹³ Genesis 2:7-8.

¹⁴ Genesis 2:21-23.

¹⁵ Genesis 1:26 - 2:24.

¹⁶ 1 John 4:8, 16.

¹⁷ Eugene Peterson. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1991), 123.

the sin of Adam and Eve. The narrative in Chapter 3 involved the Triune God; Satan, a fallen angel; Adam, the first created man; and Eve, the first created woman. However, before examining the fall in the garden, it is imperative to first understand the conversation that took place between God and Adam in Chapter 2. In this narrative, God clearly explained to Adam what trees were acceptable for him to consume for food and what tree was not acceptable for him to consume for food. God emphatically explained to Adam with crystal clear instructions what not to eat and the consequences that would happen to him if he disobeyed. “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”¹⁸ As one can easily see from this Scripture God did not mince words with Adam. The Triune God was explicitly clear in his mandates, that if not followed it would result in death. Curt Thompson appropriately pointed out in his book, *Anatomy of the Soul*, that sin destroys the soul attachment with God and takes the whole person (body, mind, and spirit) down a path (spiritual, physical, psychological, social) they were not prepared to go.¹⁹

Returning to Genesis Chapter 3, of the narrative about Satan, Adam and Eve, and the Fall, it begins by stating, “the serpent (Satan) was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God has made.”²⁰ In this depiction, Satan finds Eve, not Adam, and minces words, He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”²¹ Recall, God instructed Adam, not Eve. But since Adam was given authority to care for the

¹⁸ Genesis 2:16-17.

¹⁹ Curt Thompson. *Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising connections between neuroscience and the spiritual practices that can transform your life and relationship*. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 183-184; 207-210.

²⁰ Genesis 3:1a.

²¹ Genesis 3:1b.

garden, it is correct to assume Adam instructed Eve on what God shared with him. Adam relayed this command of God to Eve. However, when Satan confronted the couple, he spoke directly to Eve. “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.”²² Nonetheless, after much confusion and disillusion of the couple by Satan, he convinced Adam and Eve that God held back from them something to make them equal to God. By taking and eating of the fruit, the couple believed the words of Satan, “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”²³ Despite God’s comprehensive care and provision, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sinned by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The next chapter in Genesis, Chapter 4 depicts Adam and Eve banished from the presence of God and standing outside Eden’s gate looking in.²⁴ Death of the soul entered the fate of Adam and Eve and through them to all of humanity. How did that happen? Why did that happen? In short, the tempter, Satan, was in the garden and deceived the couple about what God said to them by calling into question God’s character and integrity. Satan planted the seeds of doubt and postulated God was holding back his best from them.²⁵ The deceiver, Satan, filled Adam and Eve’s head with discontentment, convincing the two that they were missing out on something better, something more pleasurable, something grander than they deserved or were entitled to. Their personal actions gravely impacted the human soul; marring and tainting their

²² Genesis 3:6.

²³ Genesis 3:5.

²⁴ Genesis 3:24.

²⁵ Genesis 3:1-5.

soul with the sin of disobedience and cutting them off from the once intimate relationship between God and human beings.

Thus, the first sin, first malformation, and first soul wound. The love Adam and Eve enjoyed with God was now fleeting. As Simon Vibert observed, once Adam and Eve were snatched away from God “by the enticements of the world,” sin inwardly continued to eat away on the inside stifling God’s love.²⁶ They believed the swindler’s bag of goods; hook, line, and sinker. Their feelings of dissatisfaction and their actions of disobedience to God changed the world for the worst. The narrative of Adam and Eve’s “Fall” depicts the first and most tragic of all soul wounds as this “Fall” impacted not just the relationship between Adam, Eve and God, but all of creation and God. The fall caused malformations of fear, shame, hate, pain, and greed.²⁷ From the biblical narrative, soul wounds were now a permanent part of the human life and death experience.

The Soothing Word

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And

²⁶ Simon Vibert. *The Perpetual Battle: The World, the Flesh and the Devil*. (Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-Shire: Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 2018), 185.

²⁷ Those attributes listed are only a small sampling of malformations and is not meant to be an exhausted listing.

they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?” And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, “Physician, heal yourself.” What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.””

– **Jesus, the Son of God**²⁸

John the Beloved in his gospel unequivocally expounded that Jesus of Nazareth was the Word of God that came down from Heaven to live with human beings in the flesh.²⁹ Not only to live with human beings, but to guide and instruct people in the way to the Father’s heart. During Jesus’ earthly ministry he healed the sick, brought sight to the blind, mobility to the lame, voice to the mute, casting out demons, and forgiving sin. By his Word and through his Word people were valued, relationships restored, and the soul revived. Matthew the Evangelist stated, “Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”³⁰ From the spoken word of God to the Holy Spirit inspired written Word of God, to the living Word as Son of God, Christ Jesus is the only healing balm needed for all of humanity and for the ailing human body, mind, and spirit.

But before an individual can receive any holistic wholeness of their body, mind, or spirit, they must first come to terms with their current relationship with the Triune God. For without God’s intervention every human remedy is proved to be of vanity.³¹ Yes, God created the soul to have the inherent natural ability to repair itself. Yes, it is also possible for the soul to receive a manufactured relief or even repair through modern medicine. But the individual will not receive or achieve a complete renewal that offers them an utopian life in the Triune God. The human

²⁸ Luke 4:16-23.

²⁹ John 1:1-5.

³⁰ Matthew 9:35.

³¹ Ecclesiastes 1-2.

soul needs redemption, salvation, and sanctification through Christ Jesus. Thus, the Word of God will open the door for reconciliation with the Triune God.³² When this reconciliation is accomplished by Jesus the Son, the individual will find the wholeness and well-being for life, now and to come.

Redemption

The Latin root means “to buy back.” The meaning expresses the understanding of liberation: “the liberation of any possession, object, or person, usually by payment of a ransom.” The Greek root means “to lose.” The meaning expresses the understanding of freedom: “freeing from chains, slavery, or prison.”³³ Because of sin, all of humanity is held captive to the forces of evil and imprisoned. A helpful illustration on redemption in the Old Testament shows how the Jewish people were held captive by Egypt, but that God redeemed them.³⁴ He did not pay anything directly, but he did redeem them by his power. The same is true for the Son of God.

A valuable illustration in the New Testament offered by Matthew quoted Jesus in his gospel saying, “even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”³⁵ The cost to free humanity from the powers of evil, death, and eternal separation from the Triune God required the death of Christ upon the cross and the shedding of his blood. Christ Jesus is the sin offering to God the Father and redemption is by the free will offer of his life.³⁶ The wooing of the Holy Spirit brings the Scripture to life in the person which

³² John 1:1-5.

³³ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 1114.

³⁴ Exodus 6:6 and Deuteronomy 15:15.

³⁵ Matthew 20:28.

³⁶ Romans 3:25; Acts 20:28; Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, 1115.

opens the person's eyes to seeing their current state of affairs. Their life of sin is the number one barrier keeping them from receiving the salvific power of the Lord for their aching soul.

Salvation

The Hebrew verb *yasga* ' holds the meaning as "save" or "deliver" or "salvation."

Salvation is God's plan and purpose for offering individuals deliverance from sin and death, and ultimately to be reconciled with God. "Scripture reveals God, but it also reveals his plan to save the human race."³⁷ Matthew the Levite recorded in his Gospel how Jesus was given his name and more importantly the meaning. "...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'"³⁸ Furthermore, Jesus the Messiah written in the Gospel of John proclaimed that his purpose for coming was to provide sinners salvation and eternal life with the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."³⁹

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is the restoration of friendly relationships and of peace where there had previously been hostility and alienation. Ordinarily, it also includes the removal of the offense that caused the disruption of peace and harmony. This was especially so in the relation of God

³⁷ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, 1152.

³⁸ Matthew 1:20b-21.

³⁹ John 3:16-17.

with humanity, when Christ removed the enmity existing between God and mankind by his vicarious sacrifice.⁴⁰ The Scripture speaks first of Christ's substitutionary death in effecting reconciliation of God with sinners; of sinners appropriating this gift by faith; the promised forgiveness and salvation that become the sinners' possession by grace; and finally reconciliation with God.⁴¹

Sanctification

“Sanctification an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God.”⁴² In other words, to separate from anything evil or to dedicate for the use and purpose of the Triune God. The word sanctify itself is a process that means “being made holy or purified.” In a specific focus with Christianity it is how Christians relate with becoming more like God in his character. “Though most theologians prefer to use it in a restricted sense to distinguish it from related terms, such as ‘regeneration,’ ‘justification,’ and ‘glorification.’”⁴³

The Healing Balm

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

– John the Beloved One⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Malformations of the soul in need of healing. For my thesis-project the understanding of “healing” for both visible and invisible wounds of the soul regard growing in wholeness and well-being not elimination of the wound.

⁴¹ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, 1113.

⁴² Assemblies of God General Counsel. n.d. “Assemblies of God 16 Fundamental Truths.” Sanctification. Accessed August 21, 2021. <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Statement-of-Fundamental-Truths#9>. Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God.”

⁴³ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, 1163.

⁴⁴ John 1:1-5.

The Triune God is the Creator of all things who gives humanity breath and life. Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, is the Living Word and the spiritual-physical-psycho-social healing balm for all of humanity. Hence, Scripture is foundational for human beings living a healthy, thriving, and fulfilled lifestyle. However, depending on one's worldview of the Bible will be a determining factor as to how one practices. If a person views the Bible as God's Truth and a standard for living it will be followed much differently than a person that views the Bible as a practical self-help book with a neat storyline. Another point to take into consideration regards how people perceive Scripture. Some questions people wrestle with relate to what Scriptures should be taken as descriptive and what should be taken as prescriptive. Depending on the response will determine the spiritual practice.

Nevertheless, the primary purpose for God's Word is to bring the reader into the presence of God in hopes of encountering the Word of God: The Living Savior and Lord, Jesus the Messiah. In his book titled, *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*, Casey asserts, "To all who receive the implanted word in a spirit of meekness, it has the power to bring life (James 1:17). When I read, I am opening myself to a God who changes history. I not only receive guidance and comfort, I offer God the opportunity to revolutionize the whole tenor of that segment of history that is my little life."⁴⁵

The following Scriptures when practiced can be extremely healing while offering improved health and well-being. This includes connecting and growing with God for one's meaning, purpose, and hope. These Scriptures are: Proverbs 4:20-22; Exodus 15:25b-26; Isaiah 53:4-5, and Matthew 11:28-19.

⁴⁵ Michael Casey. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*. (Liguori, MO: Liguori/Triumph, 1996), 47. This superb example demonstrates the potential for a malformed soul to be reformed by the Word of God. The Christian practice, *Lectio Divina*, flows out of the Word of God and will be addressed in detail in Chapter 3.

Proverbs 4:20-22: My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh.

In this Proverb, the father is encouraging his son to stay true to the Word of God for God himself is the giver of life, both spiritual and physical. This Proverb points to the wisdom one can glean while reading the book of Proverbs. Proverbs teaches a person on how to live a healthy lifestyle, how to talk and treat others appropriately, and to seek God in their daily living in all things. For the Word of God ushers in healing to one's soul; for God's wisdom is greater than all. Notice the son is urged to keep his attention and focus on the words of the father. The son is again and again called to keep the words of the father in his heart—meaning to practice what is being taught. For if the son puts into practice what the father instructs, it is highly probable that the son would live a long and prosperous life and healing – spiritually and physically. The Son of God, Jesus, in a similar fashion reminded his disciples in John 7:38 that if they too practiced his words, they would live a long and prosperous life to include healing for their spiritual and physical life.⁴⁶

Exodus 15:25b-26: There the Lord made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, saying, “If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer.”

In Exodus, the people were worrying and distressed about the probability of war, sickness, disease, and lack of food and water that could potentially lead up to their demise. In Exodus 15, God tested the people of Israel. God made a promise to the people of Israel to be their physician and to offer them healing. But this promise had expectations for the people; they

⁴⁶ Duane A. Garrett. *The New American Commentary; Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. Vol. 14 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993.), 20-25; 51; 85-89.

had to practice loyalty and obedience. Following the words of God, putting their practice through action, and doing all that was commanded, God would then provide them with perfect divine protection as their healer.

In the Holy Bible there are several verses that declare God as the Great Physician. When God came in the flesh as Jesus the Son, he healed the sick, lame, blind, deaf, mute, diseased, demon-possessed, and raised the dead. Nothing was impossible for him. What is still true today is that God is the Great Physician and all of humanity can call on him for what ails them. The Triune God continues to reach out to individuals for healing of their soul wound and offering them salvation, reconciliation, and sanctification.⁴⁷

Isaiah 53:4-5: Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

In Isaiah 53, the caption of the section is about the Suffering Servant. These verses capture the Servant taking all the pain, anguish, sickness, and transgressions of the people of Israel by God, and in exchange, they received comfort, wholeness, and healing – both spiritually and physically. But is there more to the Prophet Isaiah’s Chapter 53 prophecy and symbolism? The New Testament is the appropriate key to unlocking these mysteries.⁴⁸

In the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John share their narrative of Jesus as the Suffering Servant fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy in many ways. The four gospels identify Jesus as a carpenter’s son who had no particular stature. As an adult, Jesus was with people most often

⁴⁷ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, *The New American Commentary*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 364–368.

⁴⁸ Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, vol. 15B, *The New American Commentary*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 455.

who were sick or with family who were sick in need of healing. These same people were overcome with grief, pain, and dealing with deep sorrow. These gospels also explain Jesus' life story of the Last Supper, the Betrayal, the Trial, the Death, and the Resurrection. Ultimately the narrative of Jesus' life gives hope to the lost, peace to the found, and aspiration to all in need of healing for their soul wounds.

Matthew 11:28-29: Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus praises his Heavenly Father and extends to all people a plea to come for spiritual and physical rest. Jesus appeals to the people who labor and are heavy laden; tired workers who are in need of refreshment and renewal. Jesus offers the individual rest, but they are the ones that must reach out to take hold of it. Jesus willingly takes part of this load, but again the individual must be willing to take what the Lord is offering.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, *The New American Commentary*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 194.

Theological Introduction

Every person on the planet is on a spiritual journey. This spiritual expedition begins at the individual's birth and ends at their death. Whether they are conscious to this notion or not still impacts their experience. Part of the experience includes suffering and contentment, pain and pleasure, grief and joy. This voyage includes the search for one's meaning, purpose, and hope. When the searching begins, anything is possible to happen, to include one wandering from place to place without resolution. On the other hand, spiritual wandering could offer the individual more than they bargained for by whatever or whomever.⁵⁰ The questions that beg to be asked are these: "Who or what is forming me? Who or what am I allowing to form my life? My spiritual life?" Mulholland stated in addition to a laissez-faire approach to spirituality, "Christian spirituality tends to view the spiritual life as a static possession rather than a dynamic and ever-developing growth toward wholeness in the image of Christ."⁵¹ Humanity's spirituality in this regard is more than just a bonus to life, but a necessity.

Whether an individual acknowledges this Divine law as a state of life's condition or not, does not negate the fact that all individuals are being spiritually reformed for good or malformed for bad. Yes, spiritual formation can be both a positive life-changing encounter or a negative life-changing mishap. Furthermore, spiritual formation can be actively pursued or passively pursued with intention or not. As a result there are three primary sources of spiritual formation: 1) God inspired spiritual transformation, 2) Self-misguided spiritual formation, and 3) A demonic disillusioned spiritual malformation.⁵²

⁵⁰ Dallas Willard. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002.), 82.

⁵¹ Robert M. Mulholland. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 16.

⁵² James 1:14, 1 John 2:16.

With this understanding at hand, individuals need to first acknowledge and accept the fact that spiritual formation is a daily part of human life and secondly to determine if one holds to an active or passive role in spiritual formation that focuses on the process and development with a defined end goal. Remember, everyone must be intentional about their spiritual formation holding to a sense of urgency for change in their approach to personal spiritual transformation.⁵³ There is an adversary, as Peter reminds humanity that is looking to kill the soul, so some may become his victim just because of a lack of situational awareness.⁵⁴ “A great part of the disaster of the contemporary life lies in the fact that it is organized around individual feelings or emotions” rather than the Word of God.⁵⁵ Christians should daily engage in appropriate biblical spiritual formation like their life depends on it, because it does.

The Foundation

The ancient desert monks understood instinctively what Duns Scotus would later articulate so intellectually: that Jesus is at the very center of Scripture, and any authentic reading of the Bible will ultimately lead to an encounter with Christ. And it is this encounter, this meeting with God on holy ground, that is the very goal and purpose of our reading.

– **Chris Webb**⁵⁶

Before a builder can start constructing a house, he must first assess the construction project, determine the cost, accept responsibility, and then start the task. Then and only then the builder can start building a solid foundation. What substance the foundation is constructed upon

⁵³ Richard J. Foster. *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*. (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1998), 76.

⁵⁴ 1 Peter 5:8.

⁵⁵ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 35.

⁵⁶ Chris Webb. *The Fire of the Word: Meeting God on Holy Ground*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2011), 140.

is the most critical component that will either make or break what is being constructed. What a person builds upon will determine the success or failure of the mission. Jesus insists to his disciples the importance for a person to build “his house upon the rock” to ensure a solid foundation in order to weather all storms of life.⁵⁷ The truth of the matter is that Jesus was speaking about true spiritual transformation found only in the Triune God. However, before anyone can allow God to develop a robust healthy spiritual formation in their life, they must first need to know what or who is the foundation. Mulholland states that to have true spiritual formation it must include the process of individuals “...being formed in the image of Christ...”⁵⁸ For true spiritual formation to take place, our foundation must be exclusively Jesus Christ for no other foundation will do.⁵⁹

If an individual desires healthy life-giving spiritual formation to take hold and develop a transformational outcome, they first must be renewed—born again as Jesus shared with the Pharisee, Nicodemus. “Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is Christianity without Christ.”⁶⁰ One must take into consideration the historical fact, but more importantly, one must listen to his story. His story is the Gospel message, the life-giving account of Jesus Christ, true salvation for all of humanity. On a more salvific level, the shed blood of Jesus Christ is humanity’s only hope of redemption. In the Book of John, Jesus responds matter-of-factly, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”⁶¹ There is no Plan B. From the very

⁵⁷ Luke 14:25-34, Matthew 7:24-27.

⁵⁸ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 16-17.

⁵⁹ 1 Corinthians 3:10-11.

⁶⁰ Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *The Cost of Discipleship*. (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1995), 59.

⁶¹ John 14:6.

beginning of creation, Jesus the Messiah, the Word of God made flesh, is humankind's only hope for a life restored with God. Luke states it point-blank in the Book of Acts, "Salvation is found in no one else [Jesus Christ], for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."⁶² In the Bible, Scripture reveals, "Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!" and "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."⁶³

God created humanity with an appetite and desire to pursue him. Opportunities to accept his help in this life, and find their meaning, purpose, hope, and healing.⁶⁴ Humanity is offered a story bigger than life itself, but unless each person confesses the sin of pride, humbles themselves, and seeks the Creator of Heaven and Earth, they are left to their own devices. Before an individual can commit to moving forward with the construction of their spiritual home foundation, they must accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord of life, accept the cost of a life-long discipleship, and place their will and life into the hands of the Triune God. If not, the rest will be done all in vain and a waste of time. The Triune God only produces true spiritual formation. So what is humankind supposed to do? The biblical answer is simple. All of humanity must humbly kneel before God, confess their sins, accept Jesus as personal savior and Lord of their life, and commit their life to Him forever.⁶⁵

⁶² Acts 4:12

⁶³ 1 Chronicles 16:11 and Isaiah 55:6 – 7.

⁶⁴ Ecclesiastes 3.

⁶⁵ Alister McGrath. *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.), 77.

The Moorings

Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

– Psalm 139:23-24

The disciplines found spiritual formation in the Christian faith can be one of fascination for exploring and applying to a daily rule of life. Though at first, what appears to start off as a simple self-examination can quickly progress into a myriad of self-observations with numerous unanswered questions.⁶⁶ Furthermore, what makes things more challenging with the self-examination process depends on the beholder's biblical worldview or philosophical lens. The individual's worldview influences understanding, and the course of action impacts the type of pursued spiritual formation. So before exploring the types of spiritual formation disciplines, a shared definition is needed to help ensure a clear singular perspective. A common biblical meaning and understanding of spiritual formation is needed. Looking back at the Church's historical development helps to rediscover a common meaning of how believers were trained up and disciplined. The Bible demonstrates the importance of teaching children the doctrine of God's Word.⁶⁷ For instance, Jesus taught God's Word was trustworthy, and Scripture was inspired by the Triune God for humanity's faith, conduct, and way of life.⁶⁸

From the very beginning of creation, people's spiritual formation was vital, but note that the words "spiritual formation," even though it was a concept, the process was not developed until around the 5th Century by the Orthodox Church. *The Upper Room Dictionary of Christian*

⁶⁶ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 52-53.

⁶⁷ Proverbs 22:6 and 2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15.

⁶⁸ John 14:6, 17:16.

Spiritual Formation defines spiritual formation in a nutshell as: “The dynamics of shaping the human spirit toward maturity and consonance.”⁶⁹ But if the definition is stopped short, people would have a belief that spiritual formation has to do more with being fully developed as a person in harmony or agreement with those around them. This definition appears to be more like a “New Age” spirituality than orthodox Christianity. However, further reading of the definition offers a more complete understanding, “...the reforming and graced transforming of our lives to be more in tune with the will of God, God’s call to us.”⁷⁰ If God’s presence and work are not understood to define who and what people are doing, nothing they come up with will be understood appropriately and lived out properly.⁷¹ Simply stated, the Triune God is central to everyone’s spiritual formation.

Foundational Spiritual Disciplines

The first primary discipline all must commit to is the reading of the Holy Bible. All Scripture, referring to the Old and New Testaments combined as a single work, “is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”⁷² Furthermore, this Scripture is infallible and a trustworthy rule of faith for all of humanity in cultivating an authoritative rule of life for developing true individual meaning and purpose in living for the here and now. Ultimately, the Judeo-Christian Bible is central and life-giving. For all of creation

⁶⁹ Keith Beasley-Topliffe. *The Upper Room: Dictionary of Christian Spiritual Formation*. (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2003), 109.

⁷⁰ Beasley-Topliffe, 110.

⁷¹ Eugene Peterson. *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 6.

⁷² 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

in its entirety, it is God's solitary plan; he created all, he directed all, he blessed all. God's Word is the declaration for every human concerning their resolve in life and how best to live out their days on Earth with abundance and vitality – *sola Scriptura*.⁷³ This Holy Word is God's love letter to his people and a light onto each person's path so that they know without a shadow of a doubt the plans God has for their life. The Bible is like a road map for each person's spiritual journey while living on Earth and each should practice reading it every day of their life. In the Book of Joshua, God's Word states, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."⁷⁴

God is very clear that not only are people expected to read his word day and night, but need to meditate on it. Eugene Peterson in his book titled, *Eat this Book*, shares how the word "meditate" in the American context has been tamed down and lost its zeal. He goes on to explain how an animal will chew on its meal and that the animal is so engrossed in the enjoyment of eating he will have a low growl or purring. With that said, when consuming the Word of God, people should find themselves savoring every morsel of the Word of God.⁷⁵ Each person needs guidance, direction, discernment, hope, and encouragement, The Holy Bible is the only appropriate road map to provide that in this life.

The second primary discipline each person must commit to and practice is praying to the Triune God. Paul teaches in 1 Thessalonians that one of the wills of God is for humans to pray

⁷³ Simon Chan. *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 159.

⁷⁴ Joshua 1:8.

⁷⁵ Eugene Peterson. *Eat This Book: A Conversation on the Art of Spiritual Reading*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006, 2.

without ceasing.⁷⁶ According to Jewish spirituality, Jews pray at least three times a day: in the morning, in the afternoon and at nightfall.⁷⁷ Jesus grew up in the Jewish faith and one could reasonably believe he prayed at least these three times daily. In addition, it is noted in the New Testament that Jesus would get up before sunrise to pray, would pray at different times of the day, and would pray at night. Learning from Jesus, every Christian should make prayer a staple of their spiritual life. Because prayer is so vital for the Christian, Paul passionately encourages the church to “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”⁷⁸ Pray without ceasing. Not only should people practice prayer three times a day, but they should pray without ceasing because that is God’s will for all.⁷⁹ Peterson also shares that “prayers are tools.” He clarifies that “prayers are not tools for doing or getting, but for being and becoming.”⁸⁰ Foster adds to the conversation, “in his *Rule* Saint Benedict insisted on regularity in prayer because he did not ever want his followers to forget who was in charge.”⁸¹ So prayer is vital to everyone’s spiritual transformation and must be a top priority for each person’s connection with God.

So what is prayer? The short answer is talking to God. This might sound trite, but it is truth. God wants a relationship with humanity, not an acquaintanceship. How long would a marriage relationship last if it were based on being an acquaintance? Not very long. So Paul

⁷⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

⁷⁷ Nissan Mindel, 2013. “The Three Daily Prayers.” Kehot Publication Society. Accessed September 11, 2018. https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/682091/jewish/The-Three-Daily-Prayers.htm

⁷⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5.

⁷⁹ Henri Nouwen. *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit*. (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2010), XVII.

⁸⁰ Peterson, *Answering God*, 2-3.

⁸¹ Foster, *Prayer*, 72.

encourages all to talk to God throughout the day and allow him full reign of one's life. In Philippians 4, Paul encouraged the Church, "The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Again, let God know the requests. He knows them before anyone even asks, but do his people have faith and belief that God cares about them to trust him with their needs? By speaking out, we are demonstrating our faith and belief in God. In the military, one value that is constantly reiterated is, "Actions speak louder than words."⁸² The same is true with God. Be a doer of the word God tells his people, not just someone who hears, but is obedient.⁸³ If people are having difficulty starting, what helps is to remember the disciples did as well and so asked Jesus to help them with prayer. This could be a perfect place to start.

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." And he said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

– **Luke The Physician**⁸⁴

The third primary discipline that all must commit to and put into practice is worship—Worship God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Paul, in Romans 12 petitions his fellow believers, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."⁸⁵ Jesus

⁸² I served 22 years in the Air Force and moving up in the ranks was educated about appropriate core values and this one was drilled down a myriad of times.

⁸³ James 1:22-25.

⁸⁴ Luke 11:1-4.

⁸⁵ Romans 12:1.

states it this way, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”⁸⁶ Individuals are made for worshipping the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the true God of all creation. The book of 1 Chronicles encourages all of humanity to daily proclaim his salvation, to share about his mighty deeds, and to remember this is where one finds their strength and joy. Jesus is humanity’s dwelling place.⁸⁷ Reading the Word of God is related to worship. Praying to the Triune God is related to worship.

However, worship can also be distinct from the Word of God and prayer. As Brother Lawrence purports: “He showed us how, at any moment and in any circumstance, the soul that seeks God may find Him, and practice the presence of God.” For Brother Lawrence, practicing the presence of God was a life of worship.⁸⁸ To further demonstrate, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* defines “worship” as: “To pay homage to or, literally, to ascribe worth to some person or thing. Hence, worship embraces the world of the reverent life, including piety and liturgy.”⁸⁹ According to *The Student Bible Dictionary*, worship includes enjoying the presence of God that is expressed both privately and corporately.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Mark 12:30-31.

⁸⁷ 1 Chronicles 16:23-31.

⁸⁸ Fleming H. Revell. *Brother Lawrence: The Practice of the Presence of God with Spiritual Maxims*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Spire Books, 1967), 13, 47.

⁸⁹ Allen C. Myers. *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 1067.

⁹⁰ Karen Dockrey, Johnnie Godwin, and Phyllis Godwin. *The Student Bible Dictionary: A Complete Learning System to Help You Understand Words, People, Places, and Events of the Bible*. (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, 2000), 250.

Spiritual Formation Disciplines

There are three primary discipline categories that need to be explored regarding Christian spiritual formation: Scripture, Prayer, and Worship.

Scripture

Christian Scripture in this context refers to the canonical text of the Judeo-Christian Holy Bible: 39 Old Testament Books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.) and 27 New Testament Books (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts of the Apostles, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.)⁹¹

Some might be able to recall someone reading Scripture to them as a small child, whether it was a grandparent reading to them before bedtime or clergy when attending church service. Listening to Scripture played a key role in one's life and faith in God. Listening to the reading of Scripture activates faith - "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."⁹² Reading Scripture, studying Scripture, and memorizing Scripture are other important aspects of practicing Christian discipleship we must not overlook. God's Word is life-giving and offers many reminders as in Psalm 119:11 for one to hide his Word in the heart and to know and

⁹¹ *The Holy Bible*, Table of Contents.

⁹² Romans 10:17.

practice it to become more like Christ.

Again, God tells his people to meditate on his Word day and night. To meditate on Scripture is to ponder the presence and activity of God as it relates to each person's presence and activity through the Word.⁹³ In addition to meditating on the Word, one should also contemplate on the Word. Where meditation is humanity seeking and speaking to God, contemplation is God seeking humanity and speaking to humanity through his Word.⁹⁴ *The Upper Room Dictionary* states contemplation is: "The focused attention of the soul toward the Divine."⁹⁵

Prayer

According to the Upper Room Dictionary prayer is when individuals "communicate with God through thoughts, words, and gestures whereby we express what we believe about God and our relationship to God and to one another."⁹⁶ Prayer can be both verbal and nonverbal communication. People can pray in silence or can pray out loud. People can pray in their own intellect or can pray through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. God's Word tells all of humanity to pray without ceasing, and it can be done by speaking to self or another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and by making a melody in one's heart.⁹⁷ In addition to those prayer practices mentioned, the practice of "prayer of the heart" could include both a breath prayer and a centering prayer.

⁹³ Beasley-Topliffe, 190.

⁹⁴ Gerald May. *The Dark Night of the Soul: A Psychiatrist Explores the Connection Between Darkness and Spiritual Growth*. (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2004.), 106-112.

⁹⁵ Beasley-Topliffe, 68.

⁹⁶ Beasley-Topliffe, 227.

⁹⁷ 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 5:19, & Psalm 150.

Worship

Worship can be broken down into two sections: 1) Individual Worship and 2) Corporate Worship. Regarding individual worship, there are many disciplines available to be accessed: silence, solitude, fasting, are a few. In addition, Paul challenges those who profess to be Christian to present their “bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,” which is their spiritual worship.⁹⁸ Barton prompts one to ponder the spiritual and inner dynamics between what are good practices of worship moving the individual toward God and what are evil practices of worship moving the individual away from God.⁹⁹

Remember, practicing one’s faith invites the Triune God to shape and fashion one in the image of his Son for a purpose, not for more rules and regulations to follow. Corporate Worship is unique and special in that the body of Christ, the Church, comes together to lift up the name of Jesus and praises the Triune God. The author of Hebrews points to this important fact through instructing believers to meet regularly to encourage each other.¹⁰⁰ As the Church gathers, it is also encouraged by Jesus to celebrate communion as a reminder of what he did on the cross for the world offering salvation and a renewed relationship, bringing to mind his return.¹⁰¹

Forms of Spiritual Formation Disciplines

There are a variety of disciplines that could be covered, but due to brevity of this paper only three unique disciplines will be examined to offer a sense of creativity and freedom

⁹⁸ Romans 12:1.

⁹⁹ Ruth Haley Barton. *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006, 112.

¹⁰⁰ Hebrews 10:25.

¹⁰¹ Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:18-20, and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.

encouraging a variety of Christians from diverse communities and cultures. The three to be shared are: 1) *Lectio Divina*, 2) the Rule of Life, and 3) Examen Journal.

Lectio Divina is a discipline that originated approximately 1,500 years ago led by a Benedictine monk. The Latin phrase means “spiritual reading,” or “sacred reading” and it is comprised of four movements: 1) Reading Scripture, 2) Meditating on Scripture, 3) Praying regarding insight of Scripture for your life; 4) Contemplating what God is sharing.¹⁰²

The Rule of Life discipline has been around for many centuries, and some would even say that it has a long standing among Christian traditions with the “best-known rule” being ascribed to the rule of Benedict.¹⁰³ A rule of life is not about developing rules to live by to impress God or others, but a way to develop a new way of living regarding spiritual formation with the hopes of creating a way of life that reflects God.

The Examen Journal is another insightful discipline that can help uncover strongholds in our life plus help people understand where they have come from and where they are heading. Another name for Examen Journal is “Spiritual Autobiography.” In Richard Peace’s book he shares in-depth the purpose of a spiritual autobiography, while shedding light on God’s interaction in the lives of his people.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Richard Peace. *Spiritual Formation Study Guides: Contemplative Bible Reading*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1999.), 11-13.

¹⁰³ Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 191.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Peace. *Spiritual Formation Study Guides: Spiritual Autobiography*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1999.), 11, 57-60.

The Calling

“We become either agents of God's healing and liberating grace or carriers of the sickness of the world.”

— **M. Robert Mulholland Jr.**

Once the Christian has allowed God to develop in them a strong foundation to create solid moorings, it is then time for them to spread their wings. As part of the human spiritual development, one must practice what they believe by training up the next generation and individuals God brings their way. God has blessed them with a wonderful spiritual formation, so let it not go to waste, but let them become agents of God's healing and liberation.¹⁰⁵ As Robert Mulholland encourages, let Christians be part of the solution for human ailments, by being the hands and feet of Jesus. Bonhoeffer echoes this same calling, “The Christian, however, must bear the burden of a brother. He must suffer and endure the brother. It is only when he is a burden that another person is really a brother and not merely an object to be manipulated.”¹⁰⁶ If a Christian were sick and in need of healing, this individual would be searching for a fellow believer to help them in time of need. They would be very thankful for this believer to offer them comfort and companionship. It is the responsibility of fellow Christians to do all they can to bring hope to a dying world in need of the balm of healing. But this calling comes with a cost. Jesus tells his followers that before they can do anything for Jesus, they must first be willing to pick up their own cross.¹⁰⁷ This calling will come at a cost – the person's life.¹⁰⁸ But is it not worth it? In Matthew 16 Jesus is noticeably clear and holds nothing back. To be a disciple of Christ each

¹⁰⁵ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 27.

¹⁰⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*. (New York, NY: HarperOne, 1954.), 100.

¹⁰⁷ Matthew 16:24-26.

¹⁰⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *The Cost of Discipleship*. (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1959.), 217.

person must decide on their own to pick up their cross and follow Jesus. Each person has a cross to bear and each person's cross is uniquely theirs. But what does the world have to offer preventing each one from picking up their cross? Matthew 28:16-20 states, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."¹⁰⁹

Jesus clearly and succinctly enjoins his followers who are joint-heirs by mandate to go throughout Earth and tell of the Good News, making other joint-heirs from all nations, tribes, and tongues. Christians do it not by their own power or strength but in the strength of Christ for all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to them. Christians, as his ambassadors invoke this power and must use it to go into the world. No country is off limits for Christians have his authority and with his authority are called to 1) make disciples of every civilization, 2) baptize them in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and 3) teach them to obey the commandment of Jesus Christ.¹¹⁰ This is a higher calling that the Christian Church must not and cannot take lightly. This requires every second of life for seeking God for his wisdom, guidance, and instruction.

Conclusion

From the foundation of Heaven and Earth, God created. From this beginning, God created the first embodied beings with eternal souls—Adam and Eve. God and humanity daily communed together and enjoyed a special bond that no other being held. But on that fateful day,

¹⁰⁹ Matthew 28:16-20.

¹¹⁰ Matthew 28:19-20.

everything changed; Adam and Eve were disobedient and sinned in the garden. Hence, the first soul wound ever encountered by humanity. A “soul wound,” defined in Chapter 1 as a significant life experience produced by a perceived or actual sin from self or others that inflicts injury upon the material or immaterial life force of the individual causing a malformation, and ultimately distancing the individual from God. Scripture attests to the fact that wounding of the soul has existed since the beginning of time as part of the human journey with the fall in the garden. Nonetheless, Scripture testifies to humanity that there is a therapeutic relief for the wounded soul, from the beginning of time God always desired to be in continual communion relationship and fellowship with his people.

Chapter 2 reminds human beings of the importance of Scripture in one’s life. For Scripture is the foundational and building block needed for every human soul to receive wholeness through redemption, salvation, reconciliation, and sanctification of the Lord Christ Jesus—the Living Healing Balm. So once an individual receives redemption, salvation, reconciliation, and sanctification are they complete in their spiritual journey until they are called home? The answer is an emphatic no. Redemption, salvation, and reconciliation are just the starting points, but sanctification is a lifelong journey. The Triune God is the one making holy or purifying, humanity turns their body, mind, and spirit over to him.

With sanctification there are three critical spiritual foundation blocks: scripture, prayer, and worship. These three foundational anchors when applied to one’s life spiritually bolster the individual’s communal relationship to the Triune God, self, and others. In addition to the three foundational anchors, there are three spiritual formation disciplines: *Lectio Divina*, the Rule of Life, and Examen Journal. These three spiritual formation disciplines are considered Christian practices that offer individuals potential therapeutic benefits that incorporate the three

foundational anchors. When applied and practiced, the individuals grappling with wounds of the soul are in a better place for God's intervention. For God is the Master Builder and is wanting to bring wholeness and well-being to all souls.

These themes identified in Chapter 1 that were explored with the lens of Scripture in Chapter 2 will be further developed and examined in Chapter 3 using a myriad of literature. The primary themes that will be focused on in Chapter 3 include malformation, soul wounds, temperaments, personality types, and different types of Christian complementary and alternative therapies.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In Chapter 1, the primary problem focused on individual soul wounds and established that every individual has experienced the wounding of the soul at least once in a lifetime. It was also postulated that soul wounds create obstacles for the individual in hopes to live out a vital and vibrant intimate relationship with the Triune God. In addition to the problem concerning individual soul wounds, another problem identified in Chapter 1 focused on the lack for Christian complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities for treatment and for the promotion of wellness. Chapter 1 also suggested that through the Christian complementary therapy of *Lectio Divina*, individuals with soul wounds could potentially find wholeness and intimacy with the Triune God.

In Chapter 2, a theological framework was established through the employment of Scripture. This framework included themes on creation, the fall of man, and the therapeutic benefits of Scripture. Important theological anchors were developed and examined to include redemption, salvation, reconciliation, and sanctification. Specific Scripture like Matthew 20, Romans 3, and John 3 were used to extrapolate and unpack the depth and breadth of God's love and much needed well-being for his people. Also in Chapter 2, a theological foundation for personal spiritual formation was constructed and fashioned by embracing the Word of God to one's life.

Key themes of Chapters 1 and 2 regarding the problem and hypothesis put forward will be further explored and investigated utilizing the literature evaluated for this chapter. These key

themes are: 1) Spiritual formation, 2) Soul wounds, 3) Intimacy with God, 4) Temperaments and personality types, 5) Spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina*, and 6) Promotional of health and well-being. To advance the argument, this thesis-project will take a deep dive into the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina*. The section on *Lectio Divina* will unpack five Christian spiritual movements: reading, meditating, praying, contemplating, and writing. These five movements will be delved into deeply for a thorough investigation to elucidate this spiritual practice and provide richer understanding.

Soul Wound Revisited

Thus says the Lord:

Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord. He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.

– **The Prophet Jeremiah¹**

A variety of immeasurable barriers interfere with humanity attaining some form of solace for the soothing of one's soul wound. What seems to be a major part of the problem involves the individual's lack of situational awareness. It appears most people have a good sense of knowing when they are not feeling entirely well but seem to lack the ability to identify or pinpoint the exact affliction or malformation that is causing them distress and injury: spiritual, physical, psychological, and social. What adds to the confusion for them is their lack of direction or

¹ Jeremiah 17:5-8

discernment making them a prime target with engaging the counterfeit kingdom: the master of malformation. These individuals not knowing where to obtain relief and deliverance find themselves going from one healer to another to another only to find themselves no different than before, or even worse off.

Spiritual formation has become one of the major movements of the late twentieth century. Spiritualities of all varieties have emerged on the landscape of our culture—Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Zen, various Eastern meditation techniques, New Age spirituality and a confusing welter of cults, to say nothing of chemically induced alterations of consciousness. In the face of a radical loss of meaning, value and purpose engendered by a largely materialistic, hedonistic, consumer society, human hearts are hungering for deeper realities in which their fragmented lives can find some measure of wholeness and integrity, deeper experiences with God through which their troubled lives can find meaning, value, purpose and identity.

The Christian community, which should have been a clear voice of liberation and wholeness in the wilderness of human bondage and brokenness, has too often been merely an echo of the culture, further confusing those on a wandering and haphazard quest for wholeness. A multitude of Christian “gurus” have emerged who promise their followers life, liberty and the perfection of happiness. Superficial pop spiritualities abound, promising heaven on earth but producing only failure and frustration for those genuinely hungering and thirsting after God.

– **M. Robert Mulholland, Jr.**²

The absence of self-awareness is another major challenge people are confronted with daily. Unbeknownst to them, each person is created in the image of God and are given a specific temperament and personality type. However, nature and nurture frequently develop the individual’s temperament and personality to include wholesome encounters and traumatic

² M. Robert Mulholland, Jr. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 14.

experiences.³

The God Attachment Theory

Every human being from the beginning of life develops relationships that are either healthy or maladaptive. The initial science and research behind these personalities known as psychoanalysis, were developed by Sigmund Freud in the 1920s. Freud focused his initial research on infants' and young children's "first object relations" and theorized that the concepts of id, ego, and superego described distinct interacting agents of the human psyche.⁴ Moreover, in the 1950s, John Bowlby discovered and coined what is known as the "Attachment Theory."⁵ In John Bowlby's article titled, "The Nature of the Child's Tie to His Mother," he explored and recorded some of the first in-depth findings on human bonding.

In Bowlby's research he discovered how human beings connect to others to form and establish attachments. His investigation focused primarily on infants and toddlers; however, later in his explorations he did investigate children and preadolescents focusing on malformed and maladaptive attachments. Through Bowlby's observations, it was realized that "the child's relationship with the mother is important for later functioning, but also to a belief that this relationship is of critical immediate importance to the child."⁶ Thus, the bonding between mother

³ Gregg A. Ten Elshof. *I Told Me So: Self-Deception and the Christian Life*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 31-40. In his book, Ten Elshof refers to situational awareness and self-awareness as "Attention Management." He states "attention management" from his perspective has two distinct sides. One of the sides deals with the deception of self by avoiding the evidence that proves to be true. On the other side deals with the truth but not for ways of accepting for correction, but rather for learning how to discount it in the future. "Attention management, then, is the first of our self-deceptive strategies."

⁴ John Bowlby. "The Nature of the Child's Tie to His Mother," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. 39 (1958), 1.

⁵ Jude Cassidy and Phillip R Shaver. *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications*, 3rd Edition. (New York, NY: The Guildford Press, 2018), 3.

⁶ Cassidy, *Handbook of Attachment*, 3.

and child is a major contributor in the later years of life regarding how the individual creates and attaches to others. In his research findings, John Bowlby posits, “Whether a child or adult is in a state of security, anxiety, or distress is determined in large part by the accessibility and responsiveness of his principal attachment figure.”⁷

Moriarty, Hoffman, and Grimes confirmed Bowlby’s findings, “Attachment theory is at its heart a theory of development, specifically a theory of how one’s early interactions and relationships with primary caregivers influence the individual’s understanding of self, others, and their relationships.”⁸ Furthermore, Moriarty agreed with Bowlby that the attachment theory holds to the differing attachment styles which are developed within the first years of a child’s life. What’s more, the working models were established primarily from the interactions the child had with the parents or primary caregivers. These interactions influence how the child throughout their life span creates and establish future relationships.⁹

In 1990, Kim Bartholomew, in her article “Avoidance of Intimacy; An Attachment Perspective,” built upon the foundation of Freud, Bowlby, and Ainsworth’s research findings developing a more comprehensive attachment style. Bartholomew established four similar, but unique attachment styles that characterized behavioral expressions of core operating patterns in adulthood; 1) Secure, 2) Anxious, 3) Avoidant, and 4) Fearful.¹⁰ To better understand

⁷ John Bowlby. *Attachment and Loss. Vol. 2: Separation: Anxiety and Anger*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1973), 23.

⁸ Glendon L. Moriarty, Louis Hoffman and Christopher Grimes. “Understanding the God Image Through Attachment Theory: Theory, Research, and Practice,” *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, Vol. 9(2) (2006): 44.

⁹ Moriarty, “Understanding the God Image Through Attachment Theory,” 46.

¹⁰ Tim Clinton and Joshua Straub. *God Attachment: Why You Believe, Act, and Feel the Way You Do About God*. (New York, NY: Howard Books, 2010), 67-75.

Bartholomew's Model of Self and Other (see Figure 4), Clinton and Straub suggest answering two critical questions: 1) Am I worthy of love?, and 2) Are others capable of loving me.¹¹

Figure 4. Bartholomew's Model of Self and Other

Bartholomew's Model of Self and Other		MODEL OF SELF (Dependence)	
		Positive View (Low Anxiety)	Negative View (High Anxiety)
MODEL OF OTHER (Avoidance)	Positive View (Low Anxiety)	SECURE Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy	ANXIOUS Preoccupied with relationships and abandonment
	Negative View (High Anxiety)	AVOIDANT Downplays intimacy, overly self-reliant	FEARFUL Fearful of intimacy, socially avoidant

With these four attachment styles it is straightforward for an adult to evaluate their life to see what category they may self-identify with. People identifying and embracing a secure attachment, tend to see themselves and others in a positive light. Bartholomew's model reveals those who feel secure also hold to a positive and trusting view of self and others. Those who self-identify with an anxious attachment see themselves in a more negative light but view others more positively and safe. These individuals have difficulty loving and trusting themselves, negatively impacting their relationships. It is a result of holding to a false narrative that they are not worthy of love or the other person's time. Individuals relating to an avoidant attachment view themselves in a positive light while others in a negative perspective. These individuals find it

¹¹ Clinton, *God Attachment*, 66.

easy to rely on oneself rather than engaging in or trusting others. A person that has a fearful attachment has a negative perspective of self and others. They tend to struggle with intimacy and find it easy for self-sabotage with relationships. It is very easy for this person to self-sabotage everything they do.

As seen from research, the way a child is brought up into the world affects the child's ability to bond with self and others. This impacts the individual for their lifetime whether healthy or maladaptive. This is the basic understanding of the Attachment Theory. So to take it to the next step one must ask the question: Does the Attachment Theory apply to human beings bonding with the Triune God and if so, what might that look like? In the third edition of the *Handbook of Attachment*, authors Pehr Garanqvist and Lee Kirkpatrick posit that an attachment-religion connection, also known as the God Attachment Theory, "resembles more closely the prototypical attachment of a child to his or her mother."¹²

So if a child has parents that are kind and loving it is more likely the child will grow up to encounter the Triune God in a comparable way. The same is true with the opposite. "A child who experienced their parents as harsh and unloving is likely to experience God in a similar manner at the unconscious, subsymbolic level."¹³ The result, the individual's formative years developing relationships will both positively and negatively impact how they form their relationship with the Triune God. The way humans believe, act, and feel about the Triune God will also influence and impact their soul attachment to God.¹⁴ If the individual has a secure attachment, most likely than not, the individual will be more open to love God, trust God, and receive God's love for their

¹² Cassidy, *Handbook of Attachment*, 918.

¹³ Moriarty, "Understanding the God Image Through Attachment Theory," 48.

¹⁴ Cassidy, *Handbook of Attachment*, 917-918.

life. For an individual with an anxious, avoidant, or fearful attachment style, the likelihood for them not holding to a loving and trusting relationship is higher, thus finding it more difficult to find the much-needed healing balm for their soul wound.¹⁵ The good news, with a comprehensive spiritual assessment and an appropriate holistic therapy, people can relearn how to establish healthy and robust meaningful relationships toward self, others, and God.

Temperaments and Personality Types

God has created and gifted each person in an unique and personal way based on his image. Knowing how one was created and gifted with a specific temperament and personality type helps the individual develop meaningful relationships with self and others to include a deep and intimate relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.¹⁶ Even though all human beings are not alike, there are some similar human behavior patterns that emerge which can be examined. There are many different approaches to extrapolate these temperaments and personality types, but for this research project the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator was employed.

So how does one find and learn about one's temperament and personality type? In their book, *Prayer and Temperament*, Michael and Norrissey discovered how the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality type enormously boosts one's ability to engage in a rigorous active and intimate prayer life for one's soul with God.¹⁷ However, before exploring how to apply the MBTI personality types, it is best to unpack this approach and tool.

¹⁵ Tracy A. Freese and Enrico DiTommanso. "Attachment of God and Church Family: Predictors of Spiritual and Psychological Well-Being," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2015): 61.

¹⁶ Richard Plass and James Cofield. *The Relational Soul: Moving from False Self to Deep Connection*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 176.

¹⁷ Chester P. Michael and Marie C. Norrissey. *Prayer and Temperament: Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality Types*. (Richmond, VA: Byrd Press, 1984), 7-10.

Mulholland purports:

This complexity of personality types has profound implications for our spiritual formation. An extrovert will find corporate spirituality tremendously enriching. Worship (especially where interaction with others is stressed), small group experiences, and sharing/caring types of spirituality will be very important to the extrovert. The introvert, however, will find solitary spirituality tremendously enriching. Solitude, meditation, monastic retreats, and reading will be very important to the introvert. The same kind of distinctions can be made for each of the other pairs of functions. In fact, the Center for Application of Psychological Type, Inc., has developed a broad range of material relation psychological type to spirituality.¹⁸

In the 1920s, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, developed personality types. During his years of research, Jung discovered that normal healthy people could be cataloged into four pairs of natural tendencies or personality characteristics. The four pairs are: Extraversion/Introversion (E/I); Sensing/Intuition (S/N); Thinking/Feeling (T/F); Judging/Perceiving (J/P).¹⁹ Jung recognized that although people can use all eight patterns of mental activity at any given time, it seemed most people had specific preferences. Jung believed, “This innate preference leads individuals to use their preferred pattern as often as possible, seek out situations where they can use it, and develop habits of behavior and personality attributes that result from using it.”²⁰ When an individual learns how they are energized, how they process information, how they then make decisions, and how they engage in the world around them it will provide them with the necessary information on how they might best engage self, others, and God.

¹⁸ M. Robert Mulholland, Jr. *Shaped By the word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation*. (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2000), 168.

¹⁹ Isabel Briggs Myers. *Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type: Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type Series*, 7th Edition. (Gainesville, FL: The Myers-Briggs Company, 2015), 2. Mulholland, *Shaped By the word*, 166.

²⁰ Myers, *Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type*, 3.

Lectio Divina

Lectio divina is a way of reading the Scripture that is congruent with the way the Scriptures serve the Christian community as a witness to God's revelation of himself to us. It is the wise guidance developed through the centuries of devout Bible reading to discipline us, the readers of Scripture, into appropriate ways of understanding and receiving this text so that it is formative for the way we live our lives, not merely making an impression on our minds or feelings. It intends the reading of Scripture to be a permeation of our lives by the revelation of God.

– Eugene H. Peterson²¹

There is a variety of Christian spiritual practices that offer individuals opportunities for devotional time in their daily spiritual journey—both individually and corporately. Individual practices include fasting, chastity, or solitude; and corporate practices involve attending church, group Bible studies, or community outreaches. But which spiritual discipline is the most appropriate for the seeking individual? The answer depends on the person's unique temperament and personality type. Understanding this challenge helps the individual find the most appropriate way for them to seek God for connecting and growing in their faith.

However, this begs the question: Is there one specialized spiritual practice that is recommended for all Christians, while considering each individual's temperament and personality practice in an individual or corporate setting? The answer is an emphatic yes. After much searching for a universal spiritual practice, *Lectio Divina* has been shown to engage all temperaments and personality types that are suitable for a range of temperaments and personality types in an individual and/or corporate setting. Michael and Norrissey reported, "Lectio Divina is a type of prayer suitable to all four basic temperaments: SJ, SP, NF, and NT....Therefore we find this form of prayer is appropriate for all four of the basic temperaments and all sixteen individual

²¹ Eugene Peterson. *Eat This Book: A Conversation on the Art of Spiritual Reading*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 81.

types of human personality.”²²

Lectio divina is not a methodical technique for reading the Bible. It is a cultivated, developed habit of *living* the text in Jesus’ name. This is the way, the *only* way, that the Holy Scriptures become formative in the Christian church and become salt and leaven in the world. It is not through doctrinal disputes and formulations, not through strategies to subdue the barbarians, not through congregational programs to educate the laity in the “principles and truths” of the Scriptures—not in any of the ways in which the Bible is so commonly and vigorously promoted among us as an impersonal weapon or tool or program. It is astonishing how many ways we manage to devise for using the Bible to avoid a believing obedience, both personal and corporate, in receiving and following the word made flesh.

— Chester P. Michael and Marie C. Norrisey²³

The Christian practice of *Lectio Divina* was developed by the Desert Fathers and Mothers around the third and fourth century.²⁴ It was during this time that these believers lived out their faith in God by putting the written and Living Word into a daily routine.²⁵ In the sixth century, Saint Benedict added this practice to his “Rule of Life” bringing this spiritual practice to the forefront as an expected godly necessity and habit. In Benedict’s Rule of Life, he outlines four spiritual movements for practicing *Lectio Divina*: *Lectio* (Read); *Meditatio* (Meditate); *Oratio* (Pray); and *Contemplatio* (Contemplate). This author has added one other vital movement: *Scripturam* (Writing).²⁶

²² Michael, *Prayer and Temperament*, 31.

²³ Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 116-117

²⁴ Fr. Philip G. Bochanski. *Wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Mothers: Ancient Advice for the Modern World*. (Gastonia, NC: Tan Books, 2019), 3. Christine Valters Paintner. *Desert Fathers and Mothers: Early Christian Wisdom Sayings*. (Nashville, TN: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2012), ix – x.

²⁵ Chris Webb. *The Fire of the Word: Meeting God on Holy Ground*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 146.

²⁶ David G. Benner. *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer*. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010), 51-55.

Lectio Divina is translated from Latin meaning “Divine Reading” and is an ancient Christian practice with scriptural reading, meditating, praying, contemplating, to which I am adding “writing,” to promote communion with God.²⁷ In Western Christianity, such as the Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Catholic Church, Lutheran Church, Anglican Church, Episcopal Church and many other Christian Churches, *Lectio Divina* is a traditional monastic practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote closeness with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word. “*Lectio Divina* is one concrete means of opening one’s self to the actions of grace and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.”²⁸ Both Casey and Peterson agreed that *Lectio Divina* is a catalyst for providing spiritual direction in one’s life intended for engaging Scripture appropriately: lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio, and scripturam.²⁹ *Lectio Divina* is one specific method of releasing an individual to the healing balm of mercy and the inspiration of the Triune God.³⁰

Lectio

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.³¹

²⁷ The spiritual practicing identified as “writing” can also be understood as “journaling” for the purpose of this thesis-project.

²⁸ Michael Casey. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*. (Liguori, MO: Liguori/Triumph, 1996), 6.

²⁹ Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 84.

³⁰ Casey, *Sacred Reading*, 6.

³¹ 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Lectio is Latin for the English word “Read” and with the practice of *Lectio Divina* it refers to the reading of Scriptures of the Holy Bible. For Christians, the Holy Bible is crystal clear that Scripture is the only all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. As noted in 2 Timothy 3 above, Paul reminded Timothy of his childhood upbringing in the word of God and vital importance of consistent living in the sacred text. It is Scripture that recalibrates the human soul and offers humanity an intimate relationship with the Triune God through faith in his son, Jesus. Webb furthered this guidance of Paul to Timothy in that, yes, “all Scripture is breathed out by God,” incorporating that “Jesus is at the very center of Scripture.” Webb posited that when genuinely reading Scripture, one should expect to encounter the Triune God. This “encountering,” as Webb shared is the primary objective and aim for reading Scripture while applying the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina*.³²

To illustrate this point further, Adele Ahlberg Calhoun in her book, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, expressed that, “Devotional reading of Scripture is rooted in the assurance that every part of the biblical story—letters, parables, Gospels, Prophets, history—is inspired and can give voice to God’s particular word to us.”³³ Meaning, getting the word of God into the soul of the individual, communicated by these authors, is truly life-giving. As Richard Peace also pointed out in his book, *Contemplative Bible Reading*, shifted the individual toward God and when encountering God, the individual’s life is revealed to His holiness, wholeness, and heart. “In the short term we gain a new way of Bible study and prayer.... In the long term we hope to gain transformation.”³⁴ To be transformed is to engage the Triune God and receive healing balm for

³² Webb, *The Fire of the Word*, 60, 67, and 140.

³³ Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*. Revised and Expanded Edition. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 188.

³⁴ Richard Peace. *Contemplative Bible Reading: Experiencing God Through Scripture*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1999), 12, 101.

one's soul—body, mind and spirit. Peterson expounded upon this notion: “Come to the Table and eat this book, for every word in the book is intended to do something in us, give health and wholeness, vitality and holiness to our souls and body.”

But what happens when the Scripture is neglected or dismissed in one's spiritual life and practice? How does this impact the believer? Eugene Peterson in his book, *Eat This Book: a conversation in the art of spiritual reading*, writes:

But as it turns out, in this business of living the Christian life, ranking high among the most neglected aspects is one having to do with the reading of the Christian Scriptures. Not that Christians don't own and read their Bibles. And not that Christians don't believe that their Bibles are the word of God. What is neglected is reading the Scripture formatively, reading in order to live.... Reading the Scriptures is not an activity discrete from living the gospel but one integral to it. It means letting Another have a say in everything we are saying and doing. It is as easy as that. And as hard.³⁵

In John 15, Jesus boldly proclaimed, without holding back, to his followers that those who did not follow his instructions or the word of God could expect to be cut off from him like one being pruned and thrown in the fire.³⁶ As in John 15, and with Peterson, Webb encouraged the sojourner that, “God is not simply an author of the text—he is the Author of life.”³⁷ Contemplative reading of the Holy Bible ushers the individual into the presence and communion of the Triune God.

³⁵ Peterson, *Eat This Book*, xi -xii.

³⁶ John 15:1-17.

³⁷ Webb, *The Fire of the Word*, 61.

Meditatio

Meditation is not about emptying the mind so there is nothing there. Christian meditation opens us to the mind of God and to his world and presence in the world. As we enter times of meditation, it is important to let go of our preoccupations so we can focus our minds and become present to God. Our minds are naturally designed to make association and follow tangents. Meditation is a way we train the mind to stay put so it can explore appropriate associations. Simple physical exercises like stretching, sitting comfortably and breathing deeply can help us pay attention, listen deeply and even curb our distractibility. These exercises are not an end in themselves. They simply seek to put body, mind and spirit on the same page so we can better pay attention to God and treasure what he reveals.

– Adele Ahlberg Calhoun³⁸

Meditatio is Latin for the English word “Meditate” and with the practice of *Lectio Divina* it refers to musing on the Scriptures of the Holy Bible. David Benner, in his book, *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and the Life as Prayer*, succinctly pointed out meditation “is prayer as pondering.” Continuing, Benner elaborated, “While lectio involves the senses and intuition, meditatio is primarily a cognitive (head) and effective (heart) activity.” Here Benner expressed the importance of not only engaging the individual’s mind as an activity but employing their heart while stirring the soul.³⁹ On a different angle with meditation as pondering, Peterson identified meditation as mastication. Rather than a mental passive posture, Peterson envisioned meditation as more of an active body, mind, spirit activity. Either way, the book of Joshua reminds the believer that meditation is vital to one’s soul—body, mind, and spirit.

³⁸ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 192.

³⁹ Benner, *Opening to God*, 53-54.

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.⁴⁰

– Joshua son of Nun

In a unique presentation without over complicating the movements in *Lectio Divina*, Peace described meditation as when humanity comes to God and contemplation is when God comes to humanity.⁴¹ Again, Scripture is crystal clear that followers are to practice meditating every moment consciously and unconsciously to the best of their ability and then to trust the Holy Spirit. When people meditate on the word of God, they experience an intimate and sacred encounter with the Triune God.

As Calhoun expressed, meditation opens humanity to the mind of God and his world. In addition, Peterson asserted, meditation moves the individual from being a spectator of the text to a practitioner through which the individual enters the world of the Living word. Peterson states, “This revelation is not simply a series of random oracles that illuminate momentary obscurities or guide us through perplexing circumstances. This text is God-revealing: God creating, God saving, God blessing.”⁴² The lessons learned over time from the practice of *Lectio Divina* is that the biblical message demands to be heard. That requires the individual to sit in silence and solitude and be “ruminated so that its full sweetness can be savored.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Joshua 1:7-9.

⁴¹ Richard Peace. *Meditative Prayer: Entering God's Presence*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), 11, 43.

⁴² Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 99.

⁴³ Casey, *Sacred Reading*, 75.

Oratio

All the tools are essential: the plow for farming, the book for learning, pots for cooking, prayers for believing. All the sources of our action—body, mind, spirit—are dependent on tools. Every part of our humanity is in the tool-using business. Life is the issue, human life: living well, living whole in a world in which God is in action. To live as a human being means that we use tools. Animals get by without tools, and angels get by without tools, but humans need tools. We live well or badly by means of the tools we have and how well we use them. Prayers are tools, but with this clarification: prayers are not tools for doing or getting, but for being and becoming.

– Eugene H. Peterson ⁴⁴

Oratio is Latin for the English word “Pray” and with the practice of *Lectio Divina* it refers to talking to God in the most basic form of communication. Once again, for Christians, the Holy Bible is crystal clear that disciples are to pray without ceasing per the exhort of the apostle Paul to the Church of Thessalonica.⁴⁵ Philip Yancey in his book, *Prayer: Does it Make any Difference?* States: “Prayer is the act of seeing reality from God’s point of view.”⁴⁶ Communication with God can and does take place in more ways than just someone verbally talking aloud. Communication with God happens “through thoughts, words, and gestures whereby we express what we believe about God and our relationship to God and to one another.”⁴⁷ Again, praying to God happens when an individual expresses themselves with the Triune God conveyed through verbal and nonverbal communication. Whether praying aloud, mentally, or by expression, individuals are connecting and communicating with the Triune God.

In addition to what was shared about in Chapter 2 relating to prayer, another valid point

⁴⁴ Peterson, *Answering God*, 1-2.

⁴⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

⁴⁶ Philip Yancey. *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* (Grand Rapids: MI, Zondervan, 2006), 29.

⁴⁷ Keith Beasley-Topliffe. *The Upper Room Dictionary of Christian Spiritual Formation*. (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2003), 227-228.

regards the importance of prayer and connectedness. James Houston postulated that people have a deep yearning for “rich human relationship” that included the need for a personal intimate attachment with God.⁴⁸ God is relational with his creation, especially with humanity. Mulholland emphasized, “Prayer, as a classical spiritual discipline, is primarily relational, not functional.”⁴⁹ All forms of human prayer are communication with God and are relational—for God is a relational being.

The final point about prayer is about the power of prayer. Foster stated, “The primary purpose of prayer is to bring us into such a life of communion with the Father that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son. The process of transformation.”⁵⁰ When we seek God through the spiritual practice of prayer, he meets us where we are at. Just being with God moves us in the direction of becoming more like his Son. The end goal of prayer is to bring the individual into the intimacy of God through experiencing his unconditional love for his children.

Contemplatio

To understand contemplation, think of gazing at a starry sky on a dark, cloudless night. Notice how you are looking at the stars. Unless you are an astrophysicist or an astronomy buff, your gaze is not likely analytical. Probably it is more one of awe than analysis. Your restless sea of churning thoughts is momentarily stilled. You are filled with wonder. Rather than seeking to understand what you are seeing, you simply open yourself to something within your vision but beyond your understanding.

— **David G. Benner**⁵¹

⁴⁸ James M. Houston. *The Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship with God*. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2007), 21.

⁴⁹ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 123.

⁵⁰ Richard Foster. *Life with God: Reading the Bible for Life Transformation*. (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2008) 57.

⁵¹ Benner, *Opening to God*, 130-131.

Contemplatio is Latin for the English word “Contemplate” and with the practice of *Lectio Divina* it refers to God communicating to the individual. *The Upper Room Dictionary* clarifies, “In Christian spirituality, contemplation refers to the focused attention of the soul toward the Divine. Contemplation is about the interior life of prayer that yearns to see and know God as God is, to experience a pure union with God, and to be absorbed by God’s all-consuming infinite love.”⁵²

From Benner’s quote above, it is evident from his description that God is “awe” inspiring and loving. His perspective also connotes a sense of solitude and silence and through this posture, opens one past the threshing floor up to the heart of God. Benner writes, “Contemplation is a way of opening our self to the ineffable—to something that is beyond us and upon which we gaze with awe. It is seeing through eyes of wonder rather than reason.”⁵³ Peace’s description of contemplation is somewhat divergent to Benner’s description. Peace writes, “Contemplation involves letting go of all conscious mental and physical activity so as to rest in God’s presence, which is a place without form or image.”⁵⁴ This involves emptying our minds of images. This is similar with Benner, in that contemplation involves seeking solitude, silence, letting go and letting God. Letting God be God and seeking his presence.

On the other hand, Peterson’s description of contemplation seems to represent an entirely different perspective. He suggested, “Contemplation in the schema of *lectio divina* means living the read/meditated/prayed text in the everyday, ordinary world. It means getting the text into our muscles and bones, our oxygen-breathing lungs and blood-pumping heart.”⁵⁵ Here Peterson’s

⁵² Beasley-Topliffe. *The Upper Room Dictionary of Christian Spiritual Formation*, 68-69.

⁵³ Benner, *Opening to God*, 131.

⁵⁴ Peace, *Meditative Prayer*, 11.

⁵⁵ Peterson, *Eat this Book*, 109-110.

contests for a new understanding of contemplation in that contemplation not only involves humanity turning to God, but that contemplation can happen anywhere and at any time. This includes the busyness of life. Peterson exposit, "...there is nothing in the practice itself that requires a vowed life of seclusion from the 'world.'"⁵⁶

However, despite each authors' unique perspective, one can still find a basic premise with the spiritual practice of contemplation. Whether practicing contemplation at home, in a monastery, or on the road, God still speaks to his people. God's voice can be audible or silent, but what really matters is to hear his voice. For Christians, the Holy Bible is crystal clear that God will and does speak to his disciples when they seek his presence. Again those who belong to God will hear his voice and more importantly will follow his instructions.⁵⁷

Scripturam

We need to listen and reflect on our experiences in the presence of the Holy Spirit to learn from them. Journaling is a way of paying attention to our lives—a way of knitting the vast ball of our experiences into something with shape that attests to the state of our soul. Frederick Buechner reminds us in *Listening to Your Life* that "there is no chance thing through which God cannot speak". On the pages of a journal, in the privacy of a moment, we can take tentative steps into truth and scour our feelings, hurts, ideas and struggles before God.⁵⁸

Scripturam is Latin for the English word "writing." This movement was not originally part of the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina*; however, writing and/or journaling was a part of some practitioners' exercise of faith. Over time, writing has become an essential development for

⁵⁶ Peterson, *Eat this Book*, 110-111.

⁵⁷ Jesus said in John 10 verse 27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." demonstrating that Christians will hear the voice of God. Another Scripture is John 16:13 regarding the Holy Spirit, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

⁵⁸ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 66.

spiritual training. This is due directly to the individual reencountering the Scripture God placed in the heart in *Lectio Divina*. For writing invites the individual to think about their recent encounter with God. Thinking helps the individual process the encounter with God, record any highlights, and address any struggles or barriers. During this time it is crucial to write down 1) what Scripture was read and mused upon, 2) prayers, laments, or petitions offered up to God, and 3) what the individual sensed God sharing with them during this encounter of *Lectio Divina*.⁵⁹

Mankind often forgets what God has done for mankind. According to Margaret Bendroth, in her book titled, *The Spiritual Practice of Remembering*, writes, “All of us have lost something important, a meaningful continuity with the past. Although we have no real language for mourning this loss, we are also becoming unglued from religious traditions which at one time provided connection with something larger and more important than ourselves.”⁶⁰ It seems that many people struggle with not remembering.

The act of writing is itself a meditation – a way of assimilating what we read. We write carefully and reverently as a means of staying longer with the text and exploring its implications. As we do it, the word is imprinted more fully on our consciousness and there is a greater possibility that it will continue to exercise and influence over us in the future. We can write it on a small card to carry with us through the day or leave it in place where we can see it.⁶¹

– Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

However, one way to overcome this barrier with memory loss is to write or journal. Writing triggers the individual to pause and reflect back on their time with God. This pause and

⁵⁹ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 66-68.

⁶⁰ Margaret Bendroth. *The Spiritual Practice of Remembering*. (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 93.

⁶¹ Casey, *Sacred Reading*, 84.

reflection ultimately assists the individual with evoking this sacred encounter with God by recording through journaling this precious experience. The Hebrew word *Zakar* for memorial is “to remember.” Moses was instructed to build an altar of stones at the foot of Mount Sinai to commemorate God’s covenant with Israel to help them remember the meeting that took place there. Writing and journaling aid to recall and savor each encounter with God.⁶²

Conclusion

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth to include creating the first embodied beings with eternal souls—Adam and Eve. The relationship between Adam and Eve with God was perfect until that fateful day when the couple was disobedient and sinned against God. That was the day the first soul wound was ever experienced by human beings. Sadly, wounds of the soul are still experienced by individuals today.

Chapter 1 offered up a reminder that the number one problem all humans face in life is a soul wound: a significant life experience produced by a perceived or actual sin from self or other that inflicts injury upon the material or immaterial life force of the individual causing a malformation, and ultimately distancing the individual from God. However, Chapter 1 also offered up a resolution to the problem. The explanation was that if an individual was struggling with anxiety, anger, fear, loneliness, meaninglessness, hopelessness, sadness, shame, stress, pain, or distress, practicing *Lectio Divina* would reduce these struggles and provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God indicating that Jesus the Son of God was the Living Word who offered life to all of humanity.

⁶² Exodus 12:14.

The Word of God is the foundation and building stones necessary for the human soul's journey for healing through redemption, salvation, reconciliation, and sanctification—an intimate koinonia with the Triune God.

Chapter 2 provided a solid theological framework and foundation for individual spiritual formation. The Scriptural framework was examined and demonstrated an intentional and purposeful design of humanity that was cultivated by the steadfast love of God. Everything God did had meaning, purpose, and intention to include offering humanity the healing balm—the Word of God. The Scripture, both Old and New Testaments provide the necessary anchor and moorings for all individuals for living a healthy, thriving, and fulfilled lifestyle.

In Chapter 3, many key authors and their writings were used for addressing the problem and hypothesis identified in Chapter 1. The reason for selected literature in this chapter was to help gain a better understanding of soul wounds and impact connecting with God. The literature also helped to understand how individual temperaments and personality types affect the way individuals' practice *Lectio Divina*. The literature utilized assisted to illustrate, challenge, and advance the argument regarding the thesis-project. In the last section of Chapter 3, the five Christian spiritual movements of *Lectio Divina*: *Lectio* (Read), *Meditatio* (Meditate), *Oratio* (Pray), *Contemplatio* (Contemplate), and *Scripturam* (Writing) were further sifted and researched for appropriate application in spiritual formation.

In Chapter 4, what was discovered and garnered in Chapters 1 - 3 will be utilized in the project design. Chapter 4 will reintroduce the problem. Then I will highlight the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina*. After *Lectio Divina* outline, the thesis-project will invite two insightful questions that deal with barriers of the soul. The primary sections in Chapter 4 that will be

addressed are: Survey Introduction, Project Methodology, Scales/Inventories/Surveys, Researcher Prep Work, and the Project.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN

Introduction

Much has been gleaned over the last three chapters of this thesis-project. In Chapter 1, “soul wound” was identified as the pinnacle barrier preventing individuals from enjoying a robust and fulfilled life. What is more, the lack of a Christian complementary or alternative therapy has added another layer of difficulty, creating a barrier for holistic care. Individuals struggling with soul wounds and lacking appropriate therapeutic support are poised for developing an acute spiritual injury or a deepening wound of their soul.

In Chapter 2, the Holy Scriptures identified key biblical themes vital for building solid spiritual foundations and moorings. Themes steeped heavily in Scripture included malformation, sin, healing, and spiritual disciplines provided godly wisdom for practical application with *Lectio Divina*. In Chapter 3, astute authors helped unpack pertinent topics bolstering the application of the five movements of *Lectio Divina: Lectio, Meditatio, Oratio, Contemplatio, and Scripturam*.

In this chapter, *Lectio Divina* will be applied to two projects as a Christian spiritual practice with therapeutic benefits. It is of my belief that *Lectio Divina* is an appropriate and viable complementary and alternative therapy for Christians to practice that will promote wholeness and well-being. Ultimately soothing the soul wound and making possible the restoration of an intimate relationship with the Triune God. Both projects incorporated a variety of measurement tools for testing and analyzing my hypothesis regarding said benefits while offering a healing balm for the soul wound.

The Start

Our spiritual formation comes within a corporate and social context. Our growth toward wholeness in Christ is for the sake of others within the body of Christ, that we might nurture one another into the wholeness of Christ. Our growth toward wholeness is also for the sake of others beyond the body of Christ, that the redeeming, healing, transforming love of God may be made known in a broken and hurting world.

– M. Robert Mulholland Jr.¹

The thesis-project presented two key questions exploring healing responses:

1) How does a soul wound create obstacles that impede a vital and vibrant attachment with the Triune God?

and

2) What remedy, if any, is available to help mitigate obstacles and offer a healing balm to soothe the soul wound?

These research questions were developed with the intention of learning:

1) How soul wounds create barriers,

2) Why soul wounds cause a relational distancing or moving away from God,

and

3) Is there a Christian complementary therapy available to ameliorate or mend the wounded soul?

Several evidence-based research projects have been conducted over the last decade regarding spiritual and moral injury; however, little evidence-based research projects were found that investigated a Christian biblical and practical whole health approach that incorporated the soul – body, mind, spirit. Nor did the completed research studies recommend a practice for

¹ M. Robert Mulholland, Jr. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 165-166.

individuals holding to a Christian biblical worldview with holistic therapeutic benefits while supporting wholeness and well-being. In response, the argument of this thesis-project is: If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing *Lectio Divina* has the potential to reduce spiritual-physical-psychological-social wounding by offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in experiencing redemption and reconciliation more fully in the Triune God.

Researcher Prep Work

In June 2020 I was certified as a VA Principal Lead Investigator. In July 2020 I was certified as a MBTI Practitioner with the Myers & Briggs Foundation. These two certification training opportunities provided the nature and shape for this research. Once that was achieved, the next step was to seek an opportunity to conduct research. The apparent viable option, due to COVID-19 restrictions at my medical facility, was to reach out to my endorser, the General Council of the Assemblies of God (GCAG), to ask for support. The support I was seeking regarded reaching out to fellow GCAG Healthcare Chaplains and VA Chaplains to participate in a pilot-project (Project 1) researching soul wounds while implementing the complementary therapy *Lectio Divina*.

The target population were Ministers who self-identified as struggling or grappling with their own anxiety, anger, fear, loneliness, meaninglessness, hopelessness, sadness, shame, stress, pain, or distress. In September 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GCAG approved my request by sending out a comprehensive email to 130 Assemblies of God Healthcare and VA Chaplains throughout the United States. The email I submitted for distribution included a welcome letter, a synopsis of the project, and commitment expectations for the candidates.

During the next four weeks I received approximately 30 individual inquiries requesting additional information or requesting to participate in the *Lectio Divina* pilot project. Prior to selecting volunteer participants into Project 1, all potential candidates were emailed a welcome invitation with a general explanation of study. Those who replied with interest were then screened to ensure they were appropriate for the program. Screening of participants included: 1) Inquiring about their purpose for participation; 2) Informing them of potential risks associated with pilot study; 3) Determining capability for connecting to Zoom, including having video, sound, microphone to engage in sessions, and 4) Being able to send and receive email. If participants presented with physical, mental, or emotional instability, I recommended and encouraged them to seek medical attention prior to participation with complementary therapy.

If they were selected for participation in the program, their next step was to review the consent form, sign the consent form, complete the pretest (Appendix G), and complete the MBTI assessment (Appendix I). Prior to the first scheduled Zoom meeting on October 19, 2020, the individuals completed the MBTI assessment, including a spiritual direction session, and completed the *Lectio Divina* pretest.² After responding to those interested and setting up interviews, a total of nine individuals were selected.³ Once those three tasks were achieved, the individual received a confirmation email containing the participant guide sessions one through three, the participant journal, and other miscellaneous handouts.

However, taking a step back nine months prior to the October 2020 Project 1, COVID-19 was wreaking havoc across the landscape of the United States. It was during January – February

² The consent form, pretest, and MBTI assessment were completed by each participant between the dates of September 30, 2020 – October 19, 2020.

³ There were nine participants in Project 1 consisting of six men and three women; however, due to an urgent matter, one individual dropped out of program after the first session. This individual's research data was not used for this thesis-project.

2020 timeframe that the medical facility where I was employed expressed concerns about medical staff self-care due to the pandemic crisis. The leadership recognized the employees' self-care was at stake and in harm's way with the potential of causing a greater hardship on the medical personnel. To help combat burnout of the healthcare clinicians, the medical facility leadership encouraged Whole Health practitioners to offer daily or weekly VA-approved complementary and integrative health services. Some of the complementary therapies offered were meditation, tai chi, and yoga in hopes of encouraging self-care while reducing stress, anxiety, and burnout.⁴

As I pondered the current problem and concern taking place across the United States, I recognized that the three complementary therapies offered were all founded on an Eastern religious practice: 1) Meditation⁵ is an ancient Buddhist philosophy; 2) Tai Chi⁶ is an ancient Chinese Taoist martial art; and 3) Yoga⁷ is an ancient Hindu spiritual discipline. What came to mind was that no complementary therapies offered for individual self-care were Christian practices. From my personal experience and interactions working with many individuals at my medical facility, it was safe to say that a healthy number of employees consider their faith tradition or religious practice to fall within the Christian foundation.

⁴ VA Health Care. n.d. "Whole Health." Complementary and Integrative Health. Accessed May 30, 2022. <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/professional-resources/clinician-tools/cih.asp>.

⁵ Susanne Hempel, Stephanie L. Taylor, Nell J. Marshall, Isomi M. Miake-Lye, Jessica M. Beroes, Roberta Shanman, Michele R. Solloway, MR, Paul G. Shekelle. "Evidence Map of Mindfulness." (VA-ESP Project #05-226, 2014), 2. Meditation is also practiced in other religious and non-religious traditions, including among Christians.

⁶ Susanne Hempel, Stephanie L. Taylor, Michele R. Solloway, Isomi M. Miake-Lye, Jessica M. Beroes, Roberta Shanman, MR, Paul G. Shekelle. "Evidence Map of Tai Chi." (VA-ESP Project #ESP 05-226, 2014), 1-2, 12.

⁷ Remy Coeytaux, Jennifer McDuffie, Adam Goode, Sarah Cassel, Wei Duan Porter, Poonam Sharma, Sreelatha Meleth, Hilary Minnella, Avishek Nagi, John W. Williams, Jr. "Evidence Map of Yoga for High-Impact Conditions Affecting Veterans." (VA ESP Project #09-010, 2014), 7, 44.

With that in mind, I put together a daily *Lectio Divina* program (Project 2) utilizing five movements: 1) Scripture, 2) Meditation, 3) Prayer, 4) Contemplation, and 5) Writing. The *Lectio Divina* program would be offered to VA employees within the United States, Monday – Friday from 10 A.M. – 10:15 A.M. eastern standard time. Some employees were then sent an invitation via their medical facility Whole Health Calendar email invite or by word of mouth. The *Lectio Divina* complementary therapy commenced in March of 2021 which was an organic outreach to combat the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance VA employee self-care. At the very onset of Project 2, there were 30 individuals that accepted the initial invite and an average of 11 individuals attended the daily *Lectio Divina* sessions.⁸

Project 1 & Project 2 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate how Christians grappling with anxiety, anger, fear, loneliness, meaninglessness, hopelessness, sadness, shame, stress, pain, or distress might reduce these symptoms by acquiring a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope through learning and practicing the Christian spiritual complementary therapy of *Lectio Divina*.

Two projects were developed and offered: Project 1: Healing Balm for the Soul Wound, and Project 2: *Lectio Divina* – Connecting and Growing with God. To prepare for Project 1, I developed a lesson plan (Appendices A, B, and C) that included standardized instructions for practicing *Lectio Divina*. Each session presented to the participants utilized the lesson plan, PowerPoint presentation (Appendices D and E), participant guides, and participant journal (Appendix F) with reflection questions. Reflection questions were associated with each session and Scripture presented. Each session utilized the Zoom platform and PowerPoint slides with an

⁸ Project 2 *Lectio Divina* focus group assessment was completed by twenty-five participants between the dates of May 22, 2022 – May 24, 2022.

introduction, orientation, agenda, main session, and breakout sessions.⁹

To prepare for Project 2, I identified the Book of Psalms as the primary base for employing six (minimum) to ten (maximum) Scripture verses a session. The daily sessions would begin from 10 A.M. and end by 10:15 A.M. every Monday through Friday utilizing a virtual platform for the setting. Skype for Business platform was used for the first year then the Medical Facility changed software. The facility uses MS Teams platform to this day. Each daily *Lectio Divina* session begins with Christian instrumental music, a PowerPoint slide displaying a peaceful wilderness image, a welcome invitation, and Scripture posting in the chat section of the daily session meeting.¹⁰

Project 1 & Project 2 Methodology

Project 1: The next step before attending the week-long pilot study was for each participant to complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) *Global Step I* assessment (Appendix I) and to participate in the 90-minute spiritual direction session regarding the *Global Step I* results. This program consisted of two two-hour sessions, and one 30-minute session. The first session included course instructions, orientation, and explanation of expectations. The session also included the history of *Lectio Divina*, the “how-to” for daily practice, and time for group practice. The midweek session offered time for input from the prior day’s individual *Lectio Divina*, and time for group practice. The last session was anticipated to be shorter due to the last day consisting only for the posttest and group/individual feedback (Appendix H).

⁹ Project 1 Zoom sessions started on Monday the 19th of October 2020 and ended on Friday the 23rd of October 2020. The pretest was administered on September 30, 2020, the posttest was administered on October 23, 2020, and Project 1 Focus Group follow-up assessment administered on May 14, 2022.

¹⁰ Project 2 started in March of 2020 and the offering of *Lectio Divina* is still on-going as participants request continued spiritual care. Project 2 focus group assessment was administered on May 23, 2022.

Participants were expected to attend all activities, participate in each session, complete the daily assignments which included time for journaling. Participants were required to practice what they learned at a minimum of five days, each day consisting of a twenty-minute personal session, including time for writing. At the final session of the last day, participants were requested to turn in a copy of their journal for data collection only. All participants were required to practice *Lectio Divina* for five days; however, it was highly encouraged for them to practice the entire seven days for a more in-depth experience connecting and growing with God.

Project 2: From the very onset of this program participants were encouraged, when able, to attend a 15-minute daily Christian complementary therapy, *Lectio Divina*, for employee self-care. No attendance expectations were required, any Monday-Friday sessions were open to join, and all sessions were recorded during the time of broadcast (10 AM eastern standard time).

Daily sessions were recorded for those who were unable to participate at the offered time or who wanted to review the prior sessions. To help individuals physically, mentally, and spiritually prepare in advance, 15-minutes prior to each session, a PowerPoint slide with a peaceful nature scene was displayed with accompanying soft playing Christian instrumental music in the background. During the main session, the complementary therapy *Lectio Divina* was offered. After the session and to help the session end well, soft Christian instrumental music was playing in the background and a blessing was spoken over those in attendance.

Scales/Inventories/Surveys

The following combined measurement tools were used in Project 1 and Project 2 and the data collected was used to conduct a qualitative and quantitative evidence-based thesis-project:

- Demographics Inventory (Projects 1 & 2)¹¹
- General *Lectio Divina* Practice Survey (Project 1)¹²
- General *Lectio Divina* Practice Survey Update (Project 2)
- The Religious and Spiritual Struggles Scale (Project 1)¹³
- Duke University Religion Index (Project 1)¹⁴
- The Attachment of God Inventory (Project 1)¹⁵
- Soul Wound Severity Assessment (Project 2)¹⁶

The measurement tools for Project 1 and Project 2 utilized a Likert Scale to include an open-ended question section for participants to offer a more detailed response when necessary. This thesis-project combined a mixed-method approach blending quantitative and qualitative investigation.

The Demographics Inventory consisted of age, gender, race, religion, and marital status. These questions were fundamental in general to help provide a universal idea of those that participated in the project. The *Lectio Divina* Practice Survey for Project 1 was designed to provide familiarity with prayer, meditation, contemplation, *Lectio Divina*, and Scripture. These

¹¹ The Demographics Inventory was developed after reviewing numerous examples on the internet.

¹² The *Lectio Divina* Practice Survey was developed after reading a myriad of literature on *Lectio Divina*.

¹³ Julie J. Exline, Kenneth I. Pargament, Joshua B. Grubbs and Ann Marie Yali. "The Religious and Spiritual Struggles Scale: Development and Initial Validation." (Psychology of Religion and Spirituality Vol. 6, No. 3, 2014), 208-222.

¹⁴ Harold G. Koenig, Arndt Büssing. "The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL): A Five-Item Measure for Use in Epidemiological Studies." (Religions Vol. 1, 2010), 78-85.

¹⁵ Richard Deck, Angie McDonald. "Attachment to God: The Attachment to God Inventory, Tests of Working Model Correspondence, and an Exploration of Faith Group Differences." (Journal of Psychology and Theology Vol. 32, No. 2, 2004), 92-103

¹⁶ The Soul Wound Severity Assessment was developed with the aim of identifying and answering my thesis-project argument.

questions were developed to determine a participant's pretest and posttest levels measuring an individual's basic spiritual practices. The *Lectio Divina* Practice Survey Update was specifically designed for Project 2 and entailed the same questions as Project 1; however, a question was added about when the participant started attending the *Lectio Divina* Project 2 time frame.

The Religious and Spiritual Struggles (RSS) Scale, developed by Julie J. Exline and her team, was used to measure Project 1 participants' pretest and posttest struggles around religious and spiritual aspects of life. This scale measured six major religious and spiritual struggles: 1) Divine, 2) Demonic, 3) Interpersonal, 4) Moral, 5) Meaning and Purpose, and 6) Doubt.¹⁷

The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL), developed by Harold G. Koenig and his team, was used to measure Project 1 participants' pretest and posttest levels associated with religion and health outcomes. This instrument is brief in that it asks only five questions on religiosity.¹⁸

The Attachment to God Inventory (AGI), developed by Richard Deck and his team, was used to measure Project 1 participants' pretest and posttest associated with the relationship between God and the individual. The inventory assessed two major relationship dynamics: Avoidance of Intimacy and Anxiety about Abandonment.¹⁹

The Soul Wound Severity Assessment (SWSA), a work in progress, was used to measure Project 1 and 2 participants' association with soul wounding. A definition for soul wound was offered with the request for each participant who self-identified experiencing a soul wound to provide additional information. Questions that regarded an approximate number of soul wounds

¹⁷ Exline, "The Religious and Spiritual Struggles Scale."

¹⁸ Koenig, "The Duke University Religion Index."

¹⁹ Deck, "Attachment to God."

experienced, severity of wounding, with an option to provide detailed comments regarding *Lectio Divina* as a source for wholeness and well-being.

Project 1

One-Week Program

Prior to Day 1:

- Complete Pretest
- Complete Myers-Briggs Type Indicator | Global Step I

Day 1 (Monday)

- Attend 2-hour *Lectio Divina* Session
- Individual *Lectio Divina* practice and Writing (20 Minutes)

Day 2 (Tuesday)

- Individual *Lectio Divina* practice and Writing (20 Minutes)

Day 3 (Wednesday)

- Attend 2-hour *Lectio Divina* Session
- Individual *Lectio Divina* practice and Writing (20 Minutes)

Day 4 (Thursday)

- Individual *Lectio Divina* practice and Journaling (20 Minutes)

Day 5 (Friday)

- Attend 30-Minute Debrief Session
- Complete Posttest and Submit Daily Journal Highlights

Lesson Plan Part 1 & 2

The Lesson Plan Part 1 (Appendix A) provides the basic layout for the program regarding the course title, plan objectives, summary, materials and equipment, references, and participants' expectations. The Plan Objectives are to enable participants to:

- 1) Name the four movements of *Lectio Divina* and the importance of writing.
- 2) Identify three characteristics of each of the four movements of *Lectio Divina*.
- 3) Understand the difference between individual *Lectio Divina* and group *Lectio Divina*.
- 4) Practice *Lectio Divina* with minimal assistance or help.
- 5) Find a renewed joy in connecting with God, self, and others.

The Lesson Plan Part 2 Sessions 1-3 (Appendices B and C) were the master lesson plans used to facilitate the weeklong pilot project. Consistency was promoted throughout with individualized *Lectio Divina* sessions for a minimum of five times a week for twenty minutes. Furthermore, each participant was encouraged to develop their own daily rhythm and routine encouraging individualized autonomy and creativity.

Session 1: Introduction to the Daily Practice of *Lectio Divina*

Before the first session was conducted, instructions were provided to all in attendance using the Zoom platform regarding internet safety, group confidentiality, and appropriate group protocol. Once housecleaning was accomplished, participants were encouraged to introduce themselves. Each person was provided an opportunity to share their name, vocation, family dynamic, and passion.

Session 1 contents consisted of 1) Complementary Modalities: Mindfulness, Tai Chi, Yoga, and *Lectio Divina*; 2) Noticing exercise; and 3) *Lectio Divina*. A PowerPoint presentation

was utilized to facilitate this session (Appendices D and E). During the introduction in the first session, it was postulated that Christians in America desired complementary and alternative therapies for a source of health and well-being. With that in mind, participants were invited to ponder this notion, and share their thoughts. From their perspective, did they as a Christian desire complementary or alternative therapy as a practice for their health and well-being? Continuing with that thought, the participants were asked about the current availability of said therapies. In the first section, the four major complementary therapies were scanned starting with Mindfulness, Tai-Chi, Yoga, and ending with *Lectio Divina*. Each complementary therapy was identified by the original and historical setting, any religious or philosophical associations, and current contemporary practice or practices.

Complementary Modalities

Mindfulness

A Buddhist-derived intervention developed through employing philosophical aspects of the Sanskrit canonical books of Buddhism.²⁰ Sarvāthasiddha, from the 6th century B.C. was considered to be the first Buddha, or “the holy sage of the Śākyas.”²¹ The Buddhist word for “mindfulness” is understood to mean “awareness, with a “central aspect of the practice is the intention to be more aware and engaged in the present moment.” In the U.S. medical arena, Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn has been recognized as the primary contributor for popularizing this Buddhist complementary and alternative therapy for the American population. The complementary

²⁰ Winfried Corduan, *Pocket Guide to World Religions: The IVP Pocket Reference Series*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 25–29. Shonin E, Van Gordon W, Slade K, Griffiths MD. “Mindfulness and other Buddhist-derived interventions in correctional settings: A systematic review.” *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. (May-Jun, 2013 2013;18-3), 365-372.

²¹ Corduan, *Pocket Guide to World Religions*, 25–29 .

therapy program he developed was a “mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program” used to treat chronic disease in the clinical setting.²²

Tai Chi

A Taoist-derived complementary therapy influenced by various Chinese religious and philosophical beliefs around 4th century B.C. Tai Chi, also known as “T'ai-chi ch'uan,” is defined as: “A non-violent martial art in which exercises are used to stabilize the forces of yin and yang and improve overall well-being by easing the internal flow of life energy known as Chi.”²³ In the U.S. medical arena, Tai Chi is “most commonly taught as a series of slow, gentle, low-impact movements that integrate the breath, the mind, and physical activity to achieve greater awareness and a sense of inner peace and well-being.” Another aspect of Tai Chi incorporates the Taoism concepts of yin and yang. The yin and yang “represent two opposing yet complementary forces described in traditional Chinese medicine” for maintaining good health of the body, mind, and spirit.²⁴

Yoga

A Hindu-derived complementary therapy designed using both spiritual and physical practices around the 6th century B.C. The name yoga is a Sanskrit word meaning “yoke,” and “is applied in a technical sense to an Indian system of religious philosophy aiming at the union of the soul with the Divine Spirit by means of concentration to the exclusion of all sense-

²² Susanne Hempel, “Evidence Map of Mindfulness,” 2.

²³ The Free Dictionary. n.d. “Tai Chi.” Accessed February 19, 2022. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/T'ai-chi+ch'%c3%bcuan>).

²⁴ Susanne Hempel, “Evidence Map of Tai Chi,” 1-2, 12.

perception.”²⁵ During the 15th century A.D., the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Shiva Samhita, and Gheranda Samhita were written with the intention of compiling the physical and mental aspects of yoga. “The modern conception of Hatha yoga, which is most broadly associated with yoga in the west, derives from these texts.”²⁶

Around the 1920’s a modern style of yoga was designed by Pattabhi Jois that comprised three primary movements; 1) poses or postures, 2) controlled breathing style, and 3) meditation. In recent decades, numerous fitness-oriented yoga regimens, such as Power yoga, Yogafit, and Bikram yoga, have also gained popularity, particularly in the United States.²⁷

Lectio Divina

A Christian spiritual practice with therapeutic benefits designed for the soul—body, mind, and spirit by monks and nuns around the 3rd century A.D.²⁸ Translated from Latin to mean “Divine Reading,” *Lectio Divina* is an ancient Christian practice of scriptural reading, prayer, meditation, and contemplation to promote communion with God.²⁹ In Western Christianity (such as the Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Catholic Church, Lutheran Church, Anglican Church, Episcopal Church and many other Christian Churches), *Lectio Divina* is a traditional monastic

²⁵ F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1786.

²⁶ Remy Coeytaux, “Evidence Map of Yoga for High-Impact Conditions Affecting Veterans,” 7, 44.

²⁷ W.J. Broad, *The Science of Yoga: The Risks and the Rewards*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 22.

²⁸ Fr. Philip G. Bochanski. *Wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Mothers: Ancient Advice for the Modern World*. (Gastonia, NC: Tan Books, 2019), 3. Christine Valters Paintner. *Desert Fathers and Mothers: Early Christian Wisdom Sayings*. (Nashville, TN: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2012), ix – x.

²⁹ Richard Peace. *Contemplative Bible Reading: Experiencing God Through Scripture*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1999), 11-15.

practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word.

Noticing Exercise

The next section in Session 1 employed a “Noticing” exercise involving engaging the five human senses: seeing, touching, smelling, hearing, and tasting. For this “Noticing” exercise, each participant was responsible for bringing to the group either a piece of fruit, slice of bread, or a cup of tea. The intention was to have the participants reengage their five senses to prepare them for connecting to the Word of God with the practice of the *Lectio Divina*. As each sense was explored, each participant employed their item with curiosity.

“Sight” was the first sense explored. The question asked, “What do you see?” regarded what the person was seeing as they explored with their eyes. Deep scrutiny and assessment rather than basic identification of their item was the goal of this exercise. Each person was given time to respond to the inquiry and then a Scripture verse was read: Luke 18:41, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let me recover my sight.” The second sense was “touch,” the question asked, “What do you feel?,” and the Scripture verse read: 1 John 1:1, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.” The third sense was “smell,” question asked, “What do you smell?,” and the Scripture verse read: 2 Corinthians 2:15a, “For we are the aroma of Christ to God.” The fourth sense was “hearing,” question asked, “What do you hear?,” and Scripture verses read: Psalm 34:11, “Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” and Romans 10:17, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” The fifth and final sense explored was “taste,” question

asked, “What do you taste?,” and the Scripture verse read: Psalm 34:8a, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!”

Lectio Divina

The concluding section for Day 1 presented an overview on *Lectio Divina*, steps necessary for preparing to read or listen to the Scripture, tools available to help relax and focus the person, and a thorough examining of the five movements of *Lectio Divina*. The five movements presented were: Reading, Meditating, Praying, Contemplating, and Writing.

Reading

When reading the Scripture, it is helpful to first identify what book of the Bible to start with and then to stay with that book until finished. Read with intentionality and curiosity, attending with the five senses. When an “aha” moment is perceived, stop reading further, and concentrate on those specific verses. Read those verses three additional times listening to the body, mind, and spirit, listening to the Holy Spirit to share a word, phrase, or image. Start the next movement.

Scripture: Romans 10:17, Nehemiah 8:3, Deuteronomy 31:11, 1 Timothy 4:13.

Meditating

When meditating on the word, phrase, or image, focus on seeing and approaching God. If needed, reread the portion of Scripture musing on each word. Questions like, “What memory or emotion is triggered or touched?” can help elucidate the five senses. Spend the necessary time before the Holy Spirit just being rather than doing. Being present is especially important and

clarifying. Listening to the narrative of the Scripture and one's spiritual journey helps to identify one's own calling of God. Start the next movement.

Scripture: Joshua 1:8

Praying

Being present with the Word eases the individual in the next movement of prayer. This next movement gives voice to what the individual is noticing through Scripture. Prayer is the response offered to God inviting him in for community and connection. Start the next movement.

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Contemplating

The next step after prayer is to rest in God. This is when the individual becomes quiet in body, mind, and spirit offering God to give voice to us. This is also where God leads the individual to encounter and receive transformation. When the individual is willing to allow God to touch the heart, healing and health flow. Start the next movement.

Scripture: 1 Kings 19-20, Revelation 21:5

Writing

This next movement is not officially part of the original *Lectio Divina* process; however, it is essential in that the individual is engaging other spiritual practices known as self-examination and memorial-making. When writing and/or journaling, the individual continues to process the encounter with God and form internal connection of the body, mind, and spirit.

At the end of the first session of Day 1, a friendly guidance reminder was given to the participants for daily practices of *Lectio Divina*:

- Schedule daily time for *Lectio Divina* (Recommend 20-minutes)
 - Find a sacred space that offers silence and solitude
 - Prepare by relaxing and opening with a breath prayer
 - Start reading in the Book of Psalms (6 to 8 verses)
- Read Scripture slowly a number of times noticing a word or phrase (four minutes)
- Meditate (four minutes)
- Pray (four minutes)
- Contemplate (four minutes)
- Write (four minutes)

Session 2: Introduction to the Daily Practice of *Lectio Divina*

Day 3 Session 2 contents consisted of 1) Check-In; 2) Session 1 Review; 3) Individual *Lectio Divina*: Four Movements as Prayers and as Metaphors; 4) Group *Lectio Divina*: Facilitator Role, Participant Role, Demonstration, Practice; 5) Visio Divina & Audio Divina; and 6) Follow-up. During check-in, four questions were asked of the participants for reflection and comment:

- How is my Daily *Lectio Divina* time with God going?
- One area that is going well with practicing *Lectio Divina* is?
- One barrier I face with practicing *Lectio Divina* is?
- Overall I would like to share?

In Session 2, the practice of individual *Lectio Divina* was taught and demonstrated with fresh eyes and new perspective: *Lectio Divina* as prayers and *Lectio Divina* as metaphors. David Benner in his book, *Opening to God*, shared how he viewed *Lectio Divina* as prayer that entailed: attending, pondering, responding, and being.³⁰ Here Benner encourages the individual to be open to the Scripture and to expect God to be present. For the reader to engage their heart and mind and respond to God's invitation. In Dr. Susan Porterfield Currie's handout, *Lectio Divina*, she shared *Lectio Divina* as metaphors starting with a head focus, heart focus, habit focus, concluding with a rest [hiatus] focus.³¹ Each focus involved the Scripture being read and allowing the Holy Spirit to bring about transformational life change to the individual for their body, mind, and spirit.

During the group *Lectio Divina* portion of the session, the participants were instructed on the two roles: facilitator and participant. The participants were provided with a facilitator guide that included guidelines and expectations for each role. The lesson included instructor led demonstration, practice, reflection, and feedback. After providing the detailed breakdown of group *Lectio Divina*, the participants were divided into groups of three: one facilitator and two volunteer members. There were two breakout sessions for practicing reading *Lectio Divina*.

Session 3: Introduction to the Daily Practice of *Lectio Divina*

Day 5 Session 3 consisted of 1) Check-In; 2) Session 2 Review; 3) Debrief, 4) Complete Posttest, and 5) Submission of Daily Writing Highlights. During this session, the group shared

³⁰ David G. Benner. *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer*. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010), 52-53.

³¹ Susan Porterfield Currie. "*Lectio Divina*." (Pierce Center for Disciple-Building, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2005). In keeping with the alliteration, I changed "rest" to "hiatus."

testimonies with the application of *Lectio Divina* for personal healing and well-being. Other individuals requested additional resources and recommended a *Lectio Divina* program offering weekly or monthly community connection. After the debrief, taking the posttest, and submitting their writing highlights, the event was closed with prayer.

Project 1 Participants

There were eight participants in the study, consisting of five men and three women. Two participants were in age category 45-54, five in age category 55-64, and one in age category 65-75. Six self-identified as White, one as Black, and one as Hispanic. Seven were married, one was married but separated. All participants identified as Christian, and all were active ministers in the Assemblies of God (Appendix K).³²

Project 2

Monday – Friday Daily *Lectio Divina* Sessions

This project began in March 2020 in response to the the COVID-19 pandemic crisis with the hopes of reducing medical personnel stress, anxiety, and burnout. Daily *Lectio Divina* sessions were offered at 10 AM for a 15-minute program during the weekday for any medical facility employee willing and able to participate. All participants prior to attending were informed that the complementary therapy, *Lectio Divina*, was a Christian practice and open to all. The project is still active with 330 followers with an average of 37 daily participants.³³

³² Data retrieved November 2020 from the *Lectio Divina* Project 1, Appendix K.

³³ Data retrieved May 2022 from the *Lectio Divina* Project 2, Appendix L.

Phase 1: Preparing Physically, Mentally, and Spiritually

Prior to the start of the *Lectio Divina* session the virtual room is open, soft Christian instrumental music is played, and a peaceful landscape image is displayed. Participants' video camera and mic are turned off to help with minimizing distractions. The message chat is on for both facilitator and participants to share during the session when encouraged to respond. A welcome message, "Welcome to *Lectio Divina* – Connecting and Growing with the Triune God" is posted on the message chat by the facilitator to include the daily Scripture for the *Lectio Divina* session. A "two-minute" starting reminder is posted in the message chat.

At 10 AM the facilitator's mic is turned on, a welcome to the daily session is offered, and what Scripture verse of the day will be read is announced. Participants are then encouraged to find a place they consider as a sacred space that will help foster the elimination of external and internal distractions. At that time, participants are encouraged to invite the presence of the Triune God to include utilizing a breath prayer. A breath prayer that has been practiced for many centuries is, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me."³⁴ Participants are reminded to employ this breath prayer, or a special breath prayer of their own. The goal is to ask the Lord to help calm the heart, quiet the mind, and relax the body so to be present as best as able with him. A time of silence is offered before moving to the next phase.

Phase 2: Practicing *Lectio Divina*

This project practiced *Lectio Divina* utilizing an alliteration comprising of four metaphors – Heart, Head, Habit, and Hiatus. The framework for this memorable way of framing this idea

³⁴ Richard Peace. *Meditative Prayer: Entering God's Presence*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), 19; Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*. Revised and Expanded Edition. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015), 232-234.

was the brainchild of Dr. Susan Porterfield Currie. In her handout, *Lectio Divina*, she shared *Lectio Divina* as metaphors starting with a head focus, heart focus, habit focus, concluding with a rest [hiatus] focus.³⁵ Six to ten verses of Scripture are selected daily for the practice of *Lectio Divina* sessions.

First Focus: Head

When preparing the participants for hearing the Scripture for the first reading, a reminder is given for them to listen to the reading of the word and to allow the Holy Spirit to share with them a word or phrase. Active engagement is encouraged with a head focus. Silence is offered before the first reading of Scripture verses. After about 20 to 30 seconds the Scripture is read in a gentle tone with a smooth cadence. After reading the Scripture, participants are encouraged to take a few moments for meditation. They are asked questions like, “What do you hear the Lord sharing with you at this moment?” and “What word or phrase do you sense the Spirit drawing your attention to?” The participants are then encouraged to speak out the word or phrase they heard to themselves and/or to share the word or phrase in the meeting chat if they are comfortable doing that. Another time of silence is offered prior to reading the Scripture verses for the second time.

Second Focus: Heart

After about 20 to 30 seconds the Scripture verses are read again with a gentle tone and a smooth cadence. After reading the Scripture, participants are encouraged to take a few moments for meditation. Active engagement is encouraged with a heart focus. They are asked questions

³⁵ Currie, “*Lectio Divina*.” In keeping with the alliteration, I changed “rest” to “hiatus.”

like, “What do you sense the Lord touching in your heart with these passages?” and “Can you name the emotion or feeling associated with your word or phrase the Spirit is drawing to your attention?” The participants are then encouraged to speak out the word or phrase they heard to themselves and/or to share the word or phrase in the meeting chat if they are comfortable doing that. Another time of silence is offered prior to reading the Scripture verses for the third and final time.

Third Focus: Habit

After about 20 to 30 seconds the Scripture verses are read again with a gentle tone and a smooth cadence. After reading the Scripture, participants are encouraged to take a few moments for meditation. Active engagement is encouraged with a habit focus. They are asked questions like, “How might the Lord want you to allow this word or phrase be lived out today? How will you allow the Word to wash over you, to cleanse you, and to create in you a heart more like his son, Jesus?” The participants are then encouraged to speak out the word or phrase they heard to themselves and/or to share the word or phrase in the meeting chat if they are comfortable doing that.

Fourth Focus: Hiatus

A prayer is offered to those who participated, for those unable to participate, and for their family, friends, coworkers, and their leadership. A blessing is offered to end the *Lectio Divina* session and encouragement is given to remind the participants to continue to meditate on the Word for today, to allow time for contemplation, and writing. The facilitator then turns off his mic and resumes the Christian instrumental music. Currently, many of the participants share their

word or phrase, words of encouragement, and anything they sense God putting on their heart for the community. After about five-minutes the *Lectio Divina* session virtual room is closed.

Project 2 Participants

There were twenty-five participants that completed the survey, consisting of three men and twenty-two women. One participant was in the age category 25-34, one in age category 35-44, nine in age category 45-54, thirteen in age category 55-64, and one in age category 65-75. Thirteen self-identified as White, ten as Black, two as Hispanic, and one as Asian. All participants identified as Christian (Appendix L).³⁶

Conclusion

Two projects were developed and offered: Project 1: Healing Balm for the Soul Wound, and Project 2: *Lectio Divina* – Connecting and Growing with God. Project 1 was from the standpoint of an investigator-need approach, whereas Project 2 was from the standpoint of a self-care need approach. Both projects were very informative and insightful. The two perspectives offered a fuller picture regarding wounds of the soul and a therapeutic benefit with *Lectio Divina* for individual wholeness and well-being. The data collected will hopefully provide positive insight about how the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina* contributed to CIH components of whole health and holistic care.

Chapter 5 will address the effectiveness of my hypothesis: If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing *Lectio Divina* has the potential to reduce spiritual-physical-psychological-social wounding by offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in

³⁶ Data retrieved May 2022 from the *Lectio Divina* Project 2, Appendix L.

experiencing more fully redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God. Chapter 5 will explore the outcomes collected from Project 1 and Project 2.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES

Introduction

The overall purpose for this thesis-project was to assess the “healing balm” efficacy of the Christian spiritual practice known as *Lectio Divina*. Will there be therapeutic benefits with marked improvement of wholeness and well-being for individuals struggling with soul wounds while noting an enhanced intimate relationship with the Triune God?

Chapter 1 concentrated on two crucial problems: 1) Individuals grappling with soul wounds; and 2) Insufficient availability for evidence-based Christian complementary or alternative therapies. To investigate these problems two research questions were postulated: 1) How does a soul wound create obstacles that impede a vital and vibrant attachment with the Triune God; and 2) What remedy, if any, is there to mitigate these obstacles and offer a healing balm to soothe the soul?

In Chapters 2 and 3 the research questions were examined in relation to Scripture and associated literature with the intention of learning: 1) How soul wounds could cause barriers for an individual’s well-being; 2) Why soul wounds could produce a sense of relational distancing from God; and 3) Where individuals with soul wounds can find healing and restoration?

My thesis-project hypothesis argued:

Christians in America desire complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities, both for treatment and for the promotion of health and wellness. If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing *Lectio Divina* has the potential to reduce spiritual-physical-psychological-social wounding by offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in experiencing more fully redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.

In Chapter 4, I developed and tested my hypothesis in two projects. Project 1 titled, “Healing Balm for the Soul Wound,” from participants of the Assemblies of God Chaplaincy Ministry. The premise, “if an individual is struggling with anxiety, anger, fear, loneliness, meaninglessness, hopelessness, sadness, shame, stress, pain, or distress, practicing *Lectio Divina* will help reduce these struggles and provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope.” Project 2 titled, “*Lectio Divina* – Connecting and Growing with God,” from participants of a large medical health care system across the United States using the same premise, “if an individual is struggling with anxiety, anger, fear, loneliness, meaninglessness, hopelessness, sadness, shame, stress, pain, or distress, practicing *Lectio Divina* will help reduce these struggles and provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope.”

In Chapter 5, the objective for my thesis-project is to assess the efficacy of the Christian spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina* as a complementary therapy for individuals, offering them positive outcomes with their health and well-being—for body, mind, and spirit. This chapter will extract the findings to determine if and how the practice of *Lectio Divina* impacted an individual’s connectedness with the Triune God. The research data collected in this chapter came from a variety of quantitative and qualitative measurements from two main sources—Project 1 and Project 2.

This chapter is broken down into eight segments: 1) Participant Information; 2) Soul Wound Severity Assessment; 3) Complementary and Integrative Health Therapies; 4) Proposed Complementary and Integrative Health Approach: *Lectio Divina*, 5) Project 1 and Project 2 Participant Responses, 6) *Lectio Divina*: Healing Balm, 7) *Lectio Divina*: Meaning, Purpose, and Hope, and 8) Conclusion.

Participant Information

Project 1

There were eight individuals that participated in the week-long “Healing Balm for the Soul Wound” project consisting of five men and three women.¹ The project began in October of 2020 with two participants self-identified in the 45-54 age category, five in the 55-64 age category, and one in the 65-75 age category. Six self-identified as White, one as Black, and one Hispanic. Seven self-identified as being married and one married but currently separated. Those that participated were all Assemblies of God ministers or laypersons, self-identified as struggling with a soul wound, and were seeking a Christian complementary or alternative therapy as a source of health and well-being. The Christian complementary therapy that was offered in Project 1 was the spiritual practice known as *Lectio Divina*.²

Project 2

Project 2 was started in March of 2020 initially attracting 30 followers³ with an average of eleven daily participants. Two years later, this Project is still going strong and growing with over 330 followers, with an average of 38 daily participants. A *Lectio Divina* Quarterly Report⁴ for the months of March, April, and May 2022 indicated:

¹ There were nine participants in the study; however, due to an urgent matter, one individual dropped out of Project 1 after the first session. This individual’s research data was not used for this thesis-project.

² The Christian spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina* was developed by the Desert Fathers and Mothers during the third and fourth century. Fr. Philip G. Bochanski. *Wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Mothers: Ancient Advice for the Modern World*. (Gastonia, NC: Tan Books, 2019), 3.

³ Skye for Business (later replaced by Microsoft Teams) was the platform used to offer daily virtual *Lectio Divina* sessions. This platform allowed for individuals to “follow” the *Lectio Divina* group page for updates and attendance.

⁴ See Appendix J for *Lectio Divina* Quarterly Report March 2022 – May 2022.

- Overall Participation for the Quarter: 2,418 individuals.
- Daily Average Participation for the Quarter: 38 Daily:
 - High: 54 Participants.
 - Low: 29 Participants.
- Sixty-three *Lectio Divina* sessions were offered and recorded for those unable to attend at the scheduled time or who were seeking to review past daily sessions.

In May of 2022, I created a survey regarding the practice of *Lectio Divina: Connecting and Growing with God*” for the 330 followers. Twenty-five individuals participated by taking the survey. All twenty-five participants self-identified as Christian: three men and twenty-two women. One participant self-identified in the 25-34 age category, one in the 35-44 age category, nine in the 45-54 age category, thirteen in the 55-64 age category, and one in the 65-75 age category. Twelve self-identified as White, ten as Black, one as White Hispanic, one as Hispanic, and one as Asian. Those that participated were all employed in the same health care system, but from different medical facilities across the United States. Of the twenty-five participants, nineteen self-identified as experiencing one or more soul wounds in their lifetime, five self-identified as not experiencing any soul wounds in their lifetime, and one skipped the response. Twenty-three self-identified as seeking a Christian complementary or alternative therapy as a source for their personal health and well-being and two individuals skipped the response. The Christian complementary therapy that was offered in Project 2 was *Lectio Divina*.

This project started March of 2020 in response to the need for employee self-care mitigation. The project continues to this day. To help provide insight regarding the daily sessions, a volunteer survey was offered to the 330 followers. From March 2020 through the first week of April 2022 the entire Book of Psalms was used for the daily Scripture. As of the second

week in April the Book of John is currently being used for daily Scripture. The twenty-five participants that completed the survey also shared when they started attending the daily *Lectio Divina* sessions.

Soul Wound Severity Assessment

In Chapter 1, I offered an exhaustive definition for “soul wound” as: A significant life experience produced by a perceived or actual sin from self or others that inflicts injury upon the material or immaterial life force of the individual causing a malformation, and ultimately distancing the individual from God.⁵ I described how wounding of the soul can cause an individual spiritual grief, physical injury, emotional distress, and social abandonment. What’s more, depending on the individual’s temperament and severity of the soul wound can cause the individual to move away from their belief and/or relationship with the Triune God. This includes a form of isolation from others and God.

During Project 1 and Project 2 I inquired of all thirty-three participants whether or not they agreed with the definition that I developed for “soul wound.” The majority (25 participants) responded positively to the definition as viable, while a minority (8 participants) did not. This response also correlated with those that indicated with experiencing a soul wound and with those that indicated they did not experience any soul wounds in life.⁶

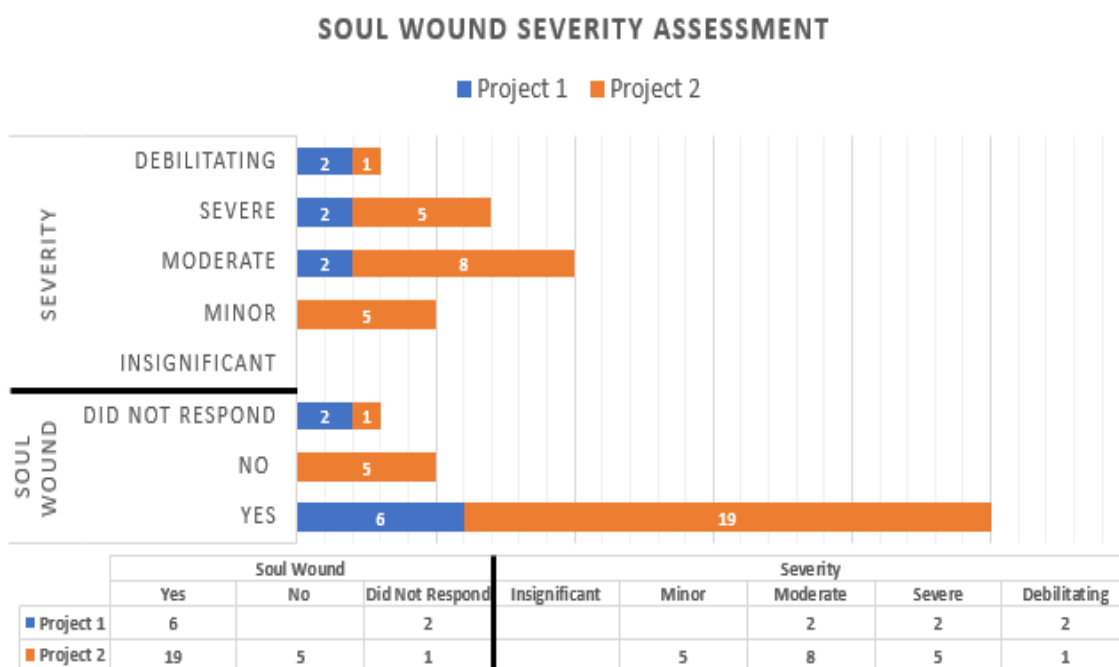
Combined with both projects, a total of twenty-five individuals out of thirty-three reported having at least one soul wound in their lifetime. Five individuals reported they did not

⁵ Material or immaterial life force: soul; body, mind, and spirit. Life experience environments: spiritual, physical, psychological, and social.

⁶ Two individuals from Project 1 two individuals did not provide a response to this question and one individual from Project 2 did not provide a response to this question.

believe they had sustained at least one soul wound in their lifetime, and three individuals did not provide a response

Figure 5. Soul Wound Severity Assessment



Sixteen of the twenty-five combined participants from Project 1 and Project 2 provided insights about their personal “soul wounding” experience.⁷ Of the participants, the follow quotes have been selected to illustrate key themes:

I had bouts of loneliness living and ministering in a foreign country. I was ready to quit, and it was my kids that made me stay. It was a very dark loneliness. I wasn’t sure if it was a soul wound, but in order for me to go back, it would have to be an audible voice telling me to go...Different people respond to challenges like that and I don’t even know if I am healed from it yet. At the time it felt severe.⁸

⁷ See Appendix M for all sixteen participants shared soul wounding experience.

⁸ Project 1 Participant ID1#4, Follow-up Focus Group; June 6, 2022.

I lived a rough homelife, my relationship with father was very rough, a very abusive person. My father had a love affair with the military. I had to process bitterness and forgiveness to achieve reconciliation with my father.⁹

First soul wound, my brother making constant fun of me, physically hurting me, making me feel worthless, like I didn't matter. Second, was infertility, where my body betrayed me, and I felt like the Lord betrayed me. Third, was being touched sexually by a chiropractor.¹⁰

Years ago in my young years I separated from God believing that he did not love me because of all the bad things that were happening in my life.¹¹

I blamed God for a death that happened to someone I loved very deeply. I turned away from God and had a lot of anger and resentment. I stopped going to church and reading my Bible. I was in a very dark place.¹²

The following are words expressed by the participants who shared about their personal soul wound experience:

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| • Abandoned | • Belittled | • Death |
| • Abused | • Betrayed | • Debilitating |
| • Alone | • Blame | • Debt |
| • Angry | • Broken | • Depression |
| • Angry at God | • Bullied | • Difficult |
| • Assaulted | • Challenges | • Disillusioned |
| • Attacked | • Crisis | • Distrust |
| • Avoid | • Cursing | • Divorced |
| • Bad | • Dark | • Emotionally Abusive |

⁹ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Follow-up Focus Group; June 6, 2022.

¹⁰ Project 2 Participant ID2#3, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹¹ Project 2 Participant ID2#4, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹² Project 2 Participant ID2#9, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| • Evil | • Loss | • Sexually Abused |
| • Fearful | • Loss of faith | • Shame |
| • Give up | • Loss of Meaning | • Suffered |
| • Gossip | • Loss of Purpose | • Suicidal |
| • Guilt | • Malfeasance | • Teased |
| • Hate | • Marginalized | • Theodicy |
| • Hateful | • Mentally Abused | • Ugly |
| • Hopeless | • Molested | • Unloved |
| • Humiliation | • Negative Self-Talk | • Useless |
| • Ill | • Physically Abused | • Verbally Abused |
| • Infertility | • Quit | • Violence |
| • Isolated | • Quit Reading the Bible | • Violated |
| • Jobless | • Resentment | • Worthless |
| • Left the Church | • Rough Life | • Wounded |
| • Letting God Down | • Sad | |
| • Loneliness | • Separated from God | |

All these tragic life experiences describe by the sixteen participants all share one thing in common: “a significant life experience produced by a perceived or actual sin from self or others that inflicts injury upon the material or immaterial life force of the individual causing a malformation, and ultimately distancing the individual from God” as poignantly ascribed by the twenty-five participants as a “soul wound.” As postulated in Chapter 1 and testified in this chapter by the participants in their own words, soul wounds

do inflict injury of the individual and do create obstacles that impede a vital and vibrant attachment with the Triune God.¹³

Complementary and Integrative Health Therapies

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:

The Veterans Health Administration is America's largest integrated health care system providing care at 1,298 health care facilities, including 171 medical centers and 1,113 outpatient sites of care of varying complexity (VHA outpatient clinics), serving 9 million enrolled Veterans each year.¹⁴

The health care system where I am employed offers a variety of VA-approved complementary and integrative health approaches for treatment and for well-being from different religious practices, philosophies, and ways of life with one exception, a Christian spiritual practice. The current VA-approved approaches offered by VHA medical facilities for treatment and well-being are: 1) Acupuncture; 2) Biofeedback; 3) Clinical hypnosis; 4) Massage therapy; 5) Meditation; 6) Guided imagery; 7) Tai chi / qi gong; and 8) Yoga.¹⁵ These CIH (Complementary and Integrative Health) therapies above were developed from a variety of religious philosophies and principles to include Taoism, Hinduism, Secular Humanism, and New Age to name a few. However, there were no VA-approved CIH approaches for List 1 (required) or List 2 (optional) offered for patient treatment that align more appropriately with individuals that self-identify as Christian and/or sought a Christian religious practice, philosophy, or way of

¹³ See Appendix M for participants soul wound severity assessment from Project 1 and 2.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. "VA Veterans Health Administration: Providing Health Care for Veterans." Accessed June 25, 2022. <https://www.va.gov/health/>.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. "VA Health Care Whole Health: Complementary and Integrative Health." Accessed June 25, 2022. <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/professional-resources/clinician-tools/cih.asp>.

life.¹⁶

To bolster the argument for the need of a recognized Christian therapeutic practice, the Congressional Research Service reports, “approximately 70% of active-duty military personnel consider themselves to be of a Christian denomination. Less than 2% of active servicemembers identify with Judaism, Islam, or Eastern religions.”¹⁷ The same findings are true for United States military veterans enrolled in the VHA, and that is 70% of Veterans self-identity as Christian.¹⁸ With this data, one can determine that out of nearly 20 million Veterans in America, 14 million Veterans fall into the Christian religious affiliation, with the remaining 6 million Veterans having a non-Christian religious affiliation. A Christian spiritual practice with therapeutic benefits, it seems, would then greatly benefit the majority of active-duty military personnel and veterans by aligning with their preferred religion and/or spirituality.

In my thesis-project hypothesis I argued that Christians in the United States desired a complementary and alternative medicine modality for treatment and promotion of health and wellness. The statement I used for agreement or disagreement was: “I seek Christian complementary and/or alternative therapy as a source for my personal health and well-being.” With the two projects, Project 1 and Project 2, participants responded with an emphatic and overwhelming “Yes.” The responses were provided by thirty-one of the thirty-three participants (94%). The two individuals out the thirty-three participants that did not indicate a “Yes” or “No” response skipped the item all together.

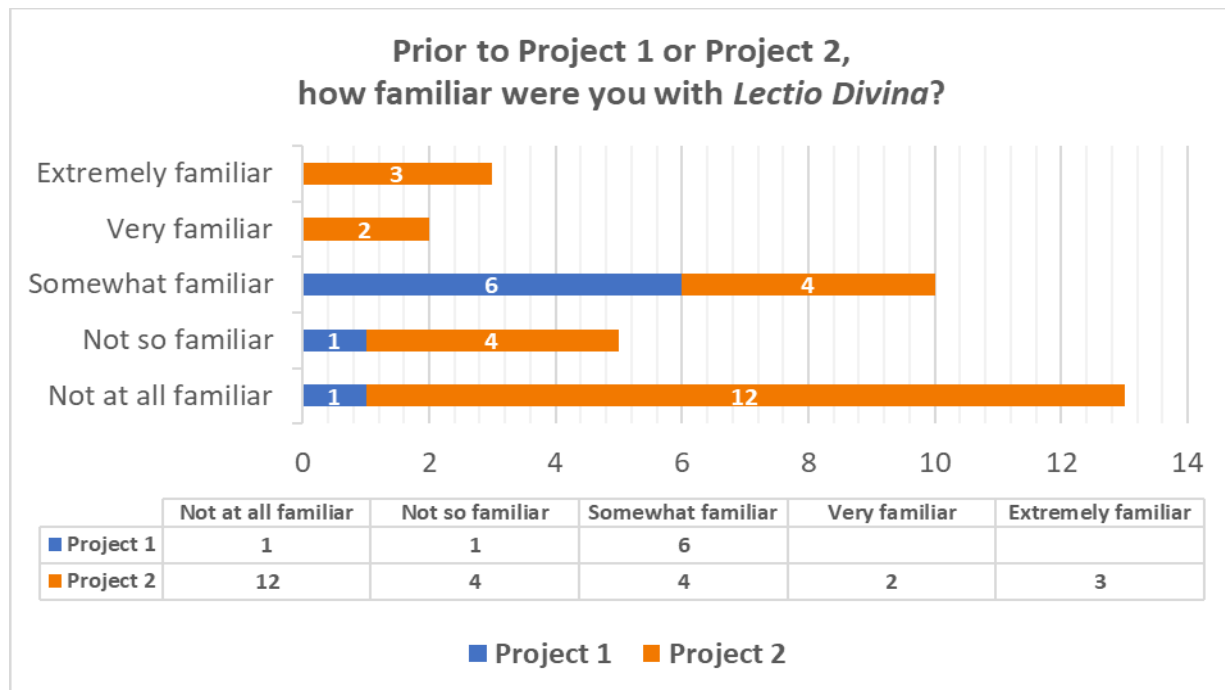
¹⁶ J. Adam Rindfleisch. “Complementary and Integrative Health Approaches in the VA: A Glossary and Where You Can Learn More.” Accessed June 26, 2022. <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTHLIBRARY/docs/Comp-Inte-Health-Approaches-in-VA.pdf>.

¹⁷ Congressional Research Service. “Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress.” (June 5, 2019), 46.

¹⁸ First Liberty. “How Religious Is Our Military? 3 Ways Faith and Defending Freedom Go Hand-in-Hand.” Accessed July 3, 2022. <https://firstliberty.org/news/how-religious-is-our-military/>.

In the Christian realm there are a variety of untapped, uninvestigated, yet promising CIH approaches for anyone seeking holistic care in the whole health movement. Approaches such as: 1) Prayer; 2) Christian meditation; 3) Contemplation; 4) Journaling; 5) Rule for Life; 6) Self-Examination; 7) Retreat; 8) Spiritual Direction; and 9) Fasting are some.¹⁹ Nevertheless, for this thesis-project the CIH approach employed was *Lectio Divina*. Again, *Lectio Divina* is translated from Latin meaning “Divine Reading” and is an ancient Christian practice utilizing Scripture as its core foundation and applied through practicing five movements: 1) Reading; 2) Meditating; 3) Praying; 4) Contemplating; and to which I am adding 5) Writing.²⁰

Figure 6. *Lectio Divina*: Familiar with Practice



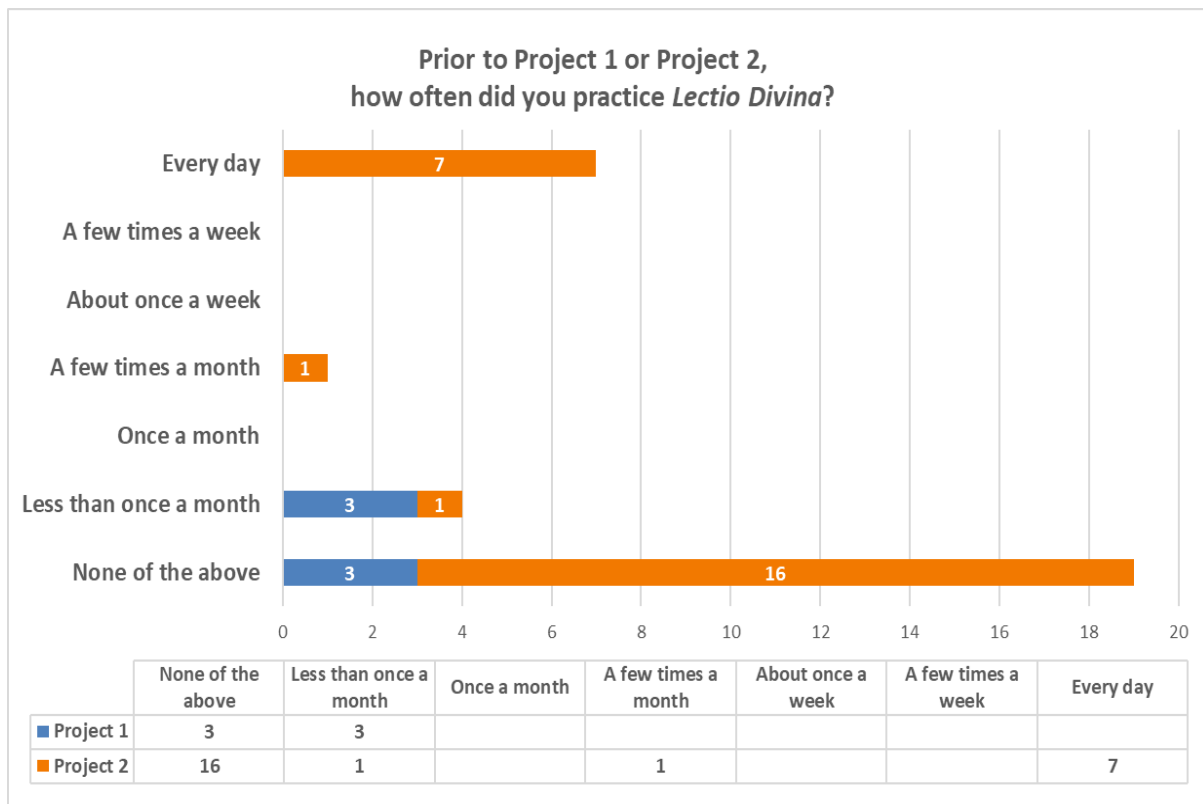
¹⁹ Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*. Revised and Expanded Edition. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 37, 54, 65, 77, 101, 132, 191, 231, and 245.

²⁰ The spiritual practicing identified as “writing” can also be understood as “journaling” for the purpose of this thesis-project.

Complementary and Integrative Health Approach: *Lectio Divina*

Of the two projects totaling thirty-three participants, thirteen individuals indicated they had no familiarity with the practice of *Lectio Divina*. Five participants indicated very little familiarity. Over half (18) of the population indicated they did not have adequate familiarity with *Lectio Divina*. Ten participants indicated they were somewhat familiar with the practice making up the second largest population. Of the remaining individuals, three indicated they were extremely familiar and two were very familiar with the practice of *Lectio Divina*.

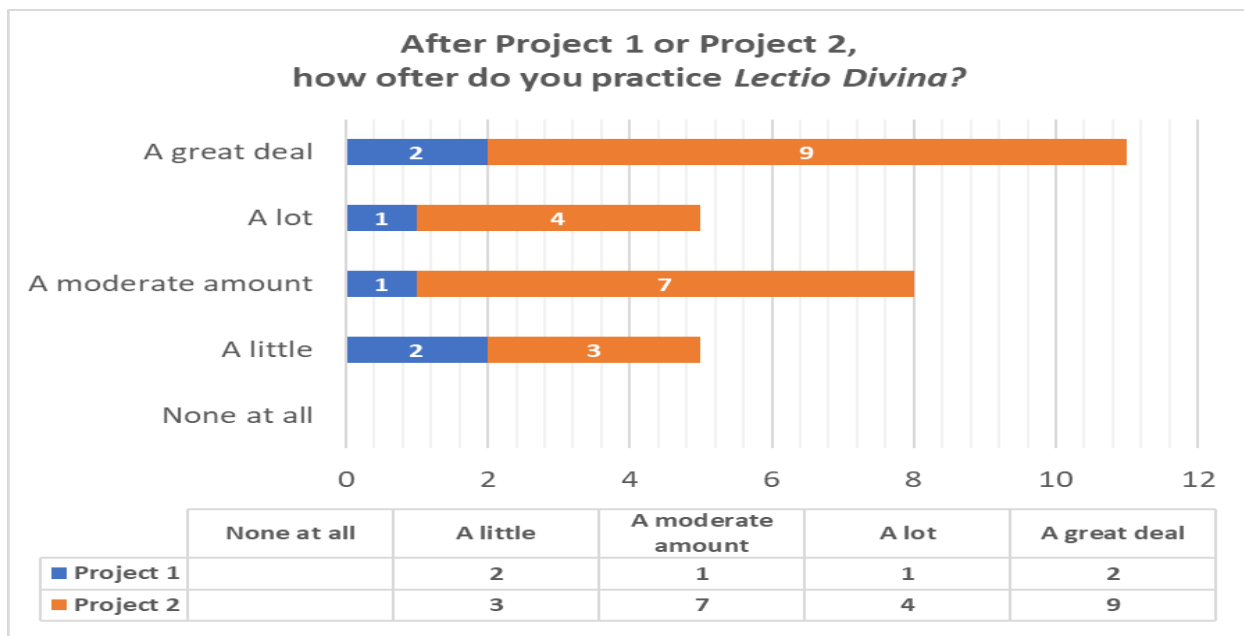
Figure 7. *Lectio Divina*: Prior to Participating in the Projects



Practice: *Lectio Divina*

The largest group, nineteen participants indicated that prior to attending Project 1 or Project 2, they did not practice *Lectio Divina*.²¹ Four indicated that they practiced less than once a month. One individual indicated they practiced a few times a month. The second largest group, seven individuals indicated they practiced every day. Of the thirty-three participants, those that indicated they did not practice or practiced very little with *Lectio Divina* prior to the projects indicated that it was directly due to them not being aware of this CIH approach. In addition, *Lectio Divina* was not made available to them or offered by their medical facility as an approved approach. This included not having an understanding or basic knowledge for practice and application to their life for their health and well-being of body, mind, and spirit.

Figure 8. *Lectio Divina*: After Participating in the Projects²²



²¹ Figure 7. Project 1 had two individuals that did not provide a response to this question.

²² Figure 8. Project 1 had two individuals that did not provide a response. Project 2 had two individuals that did not provide a response.

After participants were exposed to the spiritual principles and practices of *Lectio Divina*, it was evident via Project 1 and Project 2 surveys that the participant valued and welcomed this complementary therapy. As seen in Figure 8 compared to Figure 7., twenty-nine of thirty-three participants indicated that they have continued to practice *Lectio Divina* in some form or fashion. The four individuals remaining did not respond to the item.

Project 1 and Project 2 Participant Responses

Project 1 *Lectio Divina* Daily Writing

Writing/Journaling

During the one-week exploration all participants were provided with an electronic copy of the booklet titled “*Lectio Divina* Journal: One-Week Exploration” that I developed with the intention for each individual to use as a guide for their weeklong daily insights. Day 1, Sunday, was employed for reflection before the program began with an opportunity for the individual to practice “self-examination.” The two self-examination questions were: 1) In what specific wound areas of your life would you like to apply using *Lectio Divina*? and 2) What would you ultimately like to receive from God with practicing *Lectio Divina*?

Day 2, offered the individual a time to prepare for the *Lectio Divina* session by finding a quiet location, sitting in silence, and inviting the presence of God. Next the individual read the Day 2, Scripture, Psalm 1:1-6 three times, pausing in between listening for a word or phrase that the Holy Spirit brought to the individual’s attention. After reading the Scripture, five-minutes was encouraged to allow the individual an appropriate time for engaging in meditation. After meditation, prayer followed, and then contemplation. During each of these movements

journaling was highly encouraged in the booklet for recollection. This format was encouraged for each day utilizing the Scriptures provided:

- Day 3 – Psalm 8:1-9
- Day 4 – Psalm 91:1-16
- Day 5 – Psalm 103:1-22
- Day 6 – Psalm 139:1-24
- and Day 7 – Psalm 147:1-20.

All eight participants from Project 1 wrote insights for their daily personal *Lectio Divina* session.²³ Of the eight participants, the following quotes have been selected to illustrate key perceptions regarding this spiritual practice:

Day 1- Day 7

At the moment it would be infertility and the journey of embryo adoption. I have experienced two miscarriages earlier in our marriage. Recently we've sought fertility treatment with no pregnancy thus far. Peace, rest, confidence, and depth in spiritual identity. Really whatever God has for me.²⁴

I would like to use *Lectio Divina* when anxiety arises, and also when I am feeling down. I would like to continue to have the closeness with Jesus, and the peace that only He can give me!²⁵

Psalm 1: The Lord says to me what is your delight? What do you delight in each day? Allow me to be your delight. My word, my Son and my promises shall be your delight meditate on these things.²⁶

The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous. Lord, help me to be righteous. Foundation/source: What we allow our hearts to tap into or drink from feeds us or finishes us. What I allow my heart to tap into feeds or nourishes me. I must be wise because somethings deprive and starve us spiritually and emotionally. God,

²³ See Appendix N for all eight participants sharing their daily *Lectio Divina* journaling.

²⁴ Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

²⁵ Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 31, 2020.

²⁶ Project 1 Participant ID1#1, Journal Responses; October 20-22, 2020.

show me, lead me, place the desire within me to crave & delight in Your Word, wisdom and ways.²⁷

Scripture: Ps. 8 Lectio: What is man? Meditatio: What is man? He is so small, insignificant compared to the majesty of creation. Yet you have crowned him with glory and honor. As God's glory is set above the heavens, this creates the environment of freedom to exercise the will. The enemies of Yahweh will to rebel but instead of crushing them as He could, He uses the humble things of the world to defeat them. The praise of infants and the temporary weakness of humanity He will use to defeat the strong foes. O Yahweh how majestic is your Name! Oratio: The enemies I fear which God allows to do what they wish for a time, will be humbled by the humble things. What am I that You think about my situation, "yet" He knows about me. He has filled me with confidence and peace because He rules. I desire Your rule of God in my life and in the universe. I have peace in that. Thank you for your reassuring peace.²⁸

Lectio> [sic] How majestic is God's name in all the earth. Meditate> [sic] God has endowed his dignity and respect towards humankind and are called to be stewards for He has entrusted to us. God cares and honors me in such a way that I can participate and partner in God's redemption and creation. Oratio> [sic] Lord, in my finiteness and humanness, you accept me as your own child and crown me with dignity and respect."²⁹

Psalm 8:1-9 Lectio: When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers. Meditatio: When I see and experience nature, I feel so alive and know that you exist and are available for each of us. I love the sunset, moon, ocean, and beautiful skies. Oh God, you are majestic, all-powerful, and know my every thought. I'm glad I can share anything and everything with you. I know that your love is unconditional, and that brings joy and peace to my soul. I hear you speaking to my soul daily and embrace each word. Oratio: Oh God, I know you are calling me to a deeper relationship; help me be attentive to your Word. I want to embrace your Word daily and share it with others on the journey. Please help me to heal within and depend on you for that inner healing. Contemplatio: I'm never alone even though I miss my husband very much. I know that you are always with me. I will live one day at a time. Thank you for being my guide.³⁰

Reading Praying and Reflecting. I ran out of time for deep contemplation. I did not slow down enough to Contemplate and listen to God.³¹

²⁷ Project 1 Participant ID1#2, Journal Responses; October 22, 2020.

²⁸ Project 1 Participant ID1#4, Journal Responses; October 23, 2020.

²⁹ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

³⁰ Project 1 Participant ID1#6, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

³¹ Project 1 Participant ID1#7, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

Steadfast love- God's love is steadfast, not fleeting. Circumstances change, fears and emotions shift, days quickly pass, but God will remain faithful forever. God's steadfast love and goodness are mine forever. Throughout my life I have encountered loss, neglect, and abandonment, but no matter the circumstance I am never abandoned by God.³²

Lectio> [sic] The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger. Meditate> [sic] Oh the depth and width of the love and grace of God towards me and all God's children. Oratio> [sic] Praise the Lord, oh my soul, mind, emotions, body, and spirit for your incredible and awesome grace that looks beyond my sins and meet all my needs.³³

My day started at 01:30, I have a 7 hour drive to Louisiana for drill. I plug my iPhone into the truck stereo and listened to the Word of God. I drank a thermos of coffee and listened to a couple of books of the Bible. It struck me without the repetition of going over the scriptures many times I am not retaining the material like doing LD. When I arrived in Monroe LA after 7 hour drive I had to take a PT test. I often reflect and pray as I run. This seems to be a quiet time.³⁴

Friday Psalm 139:1 -24. You have encircled me~ Where can I go to escape Your Spirit?? NO WHERE! "This extraordinary knowledge is beyond me" I love how real King David is, he writes what I feel and think. We are never far from the Lord and His love and protection! "Even the darkness is not dark to You". "Your works are wonderful". Thank-you Lord for knowing every detail about my life, yet You still LOVE me. I am a daughter of the most HIGH GOD!!³⁵

Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to do so. It is good to praise the Lord. He is great. Sing praise and thanksgiving unto Him. Lord, help me to see You in Your goodness and praise You.³⁶

He blesses your children within you. Abundant in power. He determines the number of stars. God has not stopped creating, nor has He stopped sustaining His creation. His Word, life, truth, creation, divine power presently completes and fulfills all God intends for it to. God thank You that You are always about Your faithfulness. Your steadfast love doesn't stop it is always growing.³⁷

³² Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

³³ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

³⁴ Project 1 Participant ID1#7, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

³⁵ Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 31, 2020.

³⁶ Project 1 Participant ID1#2, Journal Responses; October 22, 2020.

³⁷ Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

Lectio Divina: Healing Balm

Project 1 and Project 2 surveys offered participants to share their experience with practicing daily *Lectio Divina* for potential improved soul wound outcomes. In Project 2, only those who indicated that they incurred a soul wound were asked to respond, but those that did not were still included to respond if they desired. The follow-up question queried when participants practiced *Lectio Divina* did they notice any improvement with their soul wounding and if so, what did they notice. The following quotes below have been selected to illustrate perceived therapeutic benefits of participants practicing *Lectio Divina*:

Yes, all parts of Lectio Divina. Lectio Divina has helped me to trust God more and to help me with forgiveness. It is a life-long process and Lectio Divina definitely is a positive tool.³⁸

This experience has been rich and rewarding to me. I greatly appreciate this spiritual discipline of lectio divina. I look forward to using this practice both in my personal devotion, couple devotions and with groups. Forgiveness and healing over broken trust in relationship.³⁹

I found my experience enlightening and encouraging me to look within and focus on making more time with God. I believe my prayer life has been challenged in a good way, and I look forward to integrating Lectio Divina daily. I know this time will strengthen my faith and spiritual walk with God.⁴⁰

Lectio Divina has helped me with trust and anger issues I had due to abuses done to me. I have learned the importance of forgiveness - not for the sake of my abusers, but for my sake. Allowing Jesus to wash over all the hurt has been liberating.⁴¹

It has enabled me to have more of an inner peace. I am more settled into my workday and more productive because my focus has improved somewhat.⁴²

³⁸ Project 1 Participant ID1#1, Journal Responses; October 20, 2020.

³⁹ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

⁴⁰ Project 1 Participant ID1#6, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

⁴¹ Project 2 Participant ID2#1, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁴² Project 2 Participant ID2#7, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

I learned to develop a breath prayer and look within my mind, heart, and soul.⁴³

Calmness, peace, hope, reassurance, and strength.⁴⁴

It has helped me to get over my depression and anxiety through the reliance of God's Word and meditation on it and prayer.⁴⁵

Lectio Divina: Meaning, Purpose, and Hope

One final question of thirty-three participants from Projects 1 and 2 asked, “How has *Lectio Divina* offered you a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in experiencing a more fully redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God? Of the thirty-three participants, the follow quotes have been selected to illustrate key themes:

It has been very beneficial in my spiritual journey. I have a closer relationship with Jesus and I look forward to my daily time of fellowship. In today's crazy world, it definitely provides me with hope, meaning and purpose.⁴⁶

It has added a meditative/reflective nature to my devotional time.⁴⁷

Focus on scripture particularly the Psalms - refreshing Word from the Lord provides redemption and reconciliation.⁴⁸

Participating in *Lectio Divina* daily allows me to keep my focus on the goodness of God. Nothing else matters. It gives me strength because I know that I am a child of God and that He is with me always.⁴⁹

⁴³ Project 2 Participant ID2#8, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁴⁴ Project 2 Participant ID2#9, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁴⁵ Project 2 Participant ID2#18, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁴⁶ Project 1 Participant ID1#1, Journal Responses; October 20, 2020.

⁴⁷ Project 1 Participant ID1#4, Journal Responses; October 23, 2020.

⁴⁸ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

⁴⁹ Project 2 Participant ID2#1, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

Knowing that there are others who have or may have experienced similar things in their life is a comfort. As a Christian with many years saved, I know that I, too, can offer kind words to others.⁵⁰

During the hustle and bustle of the work life, it is nice to be able to stop and reflect on God's word. It helps with being able to carry on in a peaceful manner and not let the outside forces stress you out.⁵¹

It gives me a sense of peace and fellowship (with both Jesus and my fellow prayer warriors) during these stress covid times. Scripture neutralizes all the negative stuff we are bombarded with each day. Praying for others makes me feel I am making a difference to God's people. Lectio Divina is a calming, strengthening oasis in my day that feeds and builds the joy in me that then allows me to nurture more fully the patients and co-workers God puts before me. I am Blessed by it.⁵²

This daily reflection and experience bring me a great sense of purpose and connection by drawing me closer to the Lord and reflect on His Word and what it means to me while being a part of a supportive community.⁵³

The following are words expressed by the participants who shared about their personal soul wound experience:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| • Able to Forgive | • Comfort | • Encouraging |
| • Able to Relax | • Comradery | • Enjoyment |
| • Appreciative | • Connected | • Enlightening |
| • Beneficial | • Developed a Breath | • Feeling Alive |
| • Blessing | Prayer | • Feeling Inspired |
| • Calming Effect | • Drawing Closer to the | • Felt Closer to God |
| • Calmness | Lord | • Felt Encouragement |

⁵⁰ Project 2 Participant ID2#2, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁵¹ Project 2 Participant ID2#15, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁵² Project 2 Participant ID2#16, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁵³ Project 2 Participant ID2#19, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| • Focused | • Known as a Child of | • Receive Forgiveness |
| • Forgiveness | God | • Refocus Each Day |
| • Freedom | • Learned to Slow Down | • Reliance on God's |
| • God's Support | • Learning | Word |
| • Growth | • Less Anxiety | • Replenish |
| • Healed my Hurt | • Less Depression | • Restoration |
| • Healing | • Liberating | • Restored Joy |
| • Heartfelt Thanksgiving | • More Awareness | • Rewarding |
| • Helped | • More Productive | • Rich |
| • Hope | • No longer Alone | • Self-care |
| • Improved Focus | • Now have Spiritual | • Settled |
| • Improved Health | Family | • Spiritual Recharge |
| • Improved Hope | • Opportunity | • Strength |
| • Improved Meaning | • Peace | • Strengthen Faith |
| • Improved Meditation | • Ponder God | • Strengthening Oasis |
| • Improved Purpose | • Prayer | • Supportive Community |
| • Improved Relationship | • Prayer Partners | • Took Away Pain |
| • Inner Peace | • Reassurance | • Tranquility |
| • Interceptor for Others | • Reborn | • Trust |

All these inspirational life experiences described above by the participants share one thing in common: "If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing *Lectio Divina* has the potential to reduce spiritual-physical-psychological-social wounding by

offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in experiencing more fully redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.” As testified by the majority of participants, applying *Lectio Divina* to their daily routine offers them a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in their life.

Conclusion

Summary

In Chapter 1, I posited a definition for “soul wound” as a significant life experience produced by a perceived or actual sin from self or others that inflicts injury upon the material or immaterial life force of the individual causing a malformation, and ultimately distancing the individual from God. I further unpacked the understanding of a soul wound as an injury that affects the body, mind, and spirit, potentially causing a distancing away from God. This distancing is not by God moving away from the individual, but rather the individual moving further away from God. The “distancing” is not a physical distancing, but rather this distancing is a spiritual one as in a perceived separation of heart. This can be due to a form of emotional shame, feelings of unworthiness or anger, and demonstrates a lack of trust of the said individual. So unless the wound of the soul is addressed by the individual, the soul wound could become spiritually septic, creating difficulties to include a moving away from God. The second question: 2) Is there a remedy to mitigate these obstacles and a healing balm to soothe the soul wound?

I postulated that the Triune God was the Healing Balm provided to all of humanity for their health and well-being. In addition, that Jesus is the Living Word, the Son of God in the flesh and known as the Great Physician. He “went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every

affliction among the people.”⁵⁴ For those today, God’s Word still rings true by Jesus offering humanity his restorative ointment for healing of diseases and afflictions to include wounds of the soul.

I hypothesized that some Christians in America desire a complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities, both for treatment and for the promotion of health and wellness. If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing *Lectio Divina* has the potential to reduce spiritual-physical-psychological-social wounding by offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in experiencing more fully redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.

I explored the Old and New Testaments with the intention of identifying a theological framework regarding the root cause of individual soul wounds. This inquiry also included both positive and negative outcomes present when individuals grappling with a soul wound are left to their own devices. Another biblical aspect that was explored pertained to the healing Word of God known as the Healing Balm in Jeremiah. Jeremiah rightfully stated in Jeremiah 8:22, “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?” and Jeremiah 46:11, “Go up to Gilead, and take balm, O virgin daughter of Egypt! In vain you have used many medicines; there is no healing for you.”⁵⁵ Jesus the Son of God is the Great Physician and the Healing Balm.

In Chapter 2, I developed a theological foundation for personal spiritual formation through incorporating Scripture into every aspect of an individual’s life journey. The Scripture themes included 1) Constructing a strong foundation, 2) Incorporating stability utilizing

⁵⁴ Matthew 4:23

⁵⁵ Jeremiah 8:22 and 46:11.

appropriate mooring, and 3) Establishing robust spiritual disciplines. The primary disciplines included Scripture and the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina*: 1) Reading, 2) Meditating, 3) Praying, 4) Contemplating, and 5) Writing. The summary for this chapter is that Scripture is the true compass that points all individuals toward an encounter with the Great Physician—Jesus Christ. However, the choice to accept this invitation for soul healing relies exclusively on the individual. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”⁵⁶

In Chapter 3, I reviewed an extensive amount of literature to advance my thesis-project argument. Themes that were evaluated included wounds of the soul, healthy and unhealthy relationship attachments, individual personality types and temperaments, and a deep dive into the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina*. Also in this chapter a number of authors shared how barriers interfered with individuals seeking and/or finding healing for their body, mind, and spirit. One such author, Gerald G. May, emphasizes how a bad habit, when left to itself hinders our intimacy with God, can quickly become an addiction, and ultimately an idol in one’s life.⁵⁷

Of all themes examined in this chapter, *Lectio Divina* was seen as the pinnacle concept for research pertaining to a Christian complementary and alternative therapy as a source of health and well-being. Furthermore, Michael and Norrisey posited that *Lectio Divina* was an appropriate complementary treatment suitable for all personality types and temperaments making it an excellent selection for testing and evaluating as such.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Revelation 3:20.

⁵⁷ Gerald G. May. *The Dark Night of the Soul: A Psychiatrist Explores the Connection Between Darkness and Spiritual Growth*. (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 61

⁵⁸ Chester P. Michael and Marie C. Norrisey. *Prayer and Temperament: Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality Types*. (Richmond, Virginia: Byrd Press, 1984), 31.

In Chapter 4, I developed and tested my hypothesis with Project 1 and Project 2. The premise for both projects was, “if an individual is struggling with anxiety, anger, fear, loneliness, meaninglessness, hopelessness, sadness, shame, stress, pain, or distress, practicing *Lectio Divina* will help reduce these struggles and provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope.” The two projects include a grand total of thirty-three participants from across the United States from many diverse demographic, cultures, and ethnicities. Project 1 concentrated on a one-week *Lectio Divina* program with a fixed group of participants where Project 2 concentrated on a daily offering of *Lectio Divina* open to any and all participants willing to practice.

Chapter 5 focused on assessing the efficacy of *Lectio Divina* as a Christian spiritual practice and as a complementary therapy for individuals. This chapter extracted the data gathered from Chapter 4’s surveys of participants: eight participants from Project 1 and twenty-five participants from Project 2. The research data collected from a variety of quantitative and qualitative measurements were extracted to determine an evidence-based research analysis with conclusion and findings.

Lessons Learned

My thesis-project hypothesis presented:

Christians in America desire a complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities, both for treatment and for the promotion of health and wellness. If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing *Lectio Divina* has the potential to reduce spiritual-physical-psychological-social wounding by offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in experiencing more fully redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.

Project 1 and project 2 research collected and examined indicated twenty-five of the thirty-three (76%) participants experienced at least one soul wound in their life. This evidence-based research seems to find that most individuals do sustain at least one soul wound in their lifetime. Furthermore, the Bible, I believe, purports that all individuals experience soul wounds, whether they acknowledge them or not. Paul states, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”⁵⁹ The Bible tells us that God is holy, and that sin separates us from Him. This separation from God is a soul wound.⁶⁰

Project 1 and project 2 research collected and examined presented twenty-seven of the thirty-three (82%) participants observed marked therapeutic benefits with the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina*. This evidence-based research seems to indicate that most individuals that started practicing a routine *Lectio Divina* regimen found *Lectio Divina* offered them a decrease in psychogenic pain, reduction from spiritual-physical-psychological-social barriers, with an improvement for soul wound recovery.

Project 1 and project 2 research collected and examined showed thirty-one of the thirty-three (94%) participants desired a Christian complementary therapy for promotion of their wholeness and well-being. This evidence-based research also suggested that most Christians in America desire a Christian complementary and alternative therapy that they could practice for their promotion of health and well-being. In addition, this research collected confirmed that individuals desired a Christian complementary therapy that aligned appropriately with their religious belief, philosophy, and way of life.

⁵⁹ Romans 3:23

⁶⁰ Isaiah 59:1-3; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-2.

The Next Steps

This thesis-project has demonstrated and confirmed with solid evidence-based research that the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina* has therapeutic benefits for individuals grappling with a wounded soul. Furthermore, *Lectio Divina* warrants further pursuit for recognition as a Complementary and Integrative Health approach for well-being. So my step is to pursue publication of my findings and to partner with either an academic institution and/or medical facility interested in moving forward with *Lectio Divina* as a potential complementary therapy. I would also like to connect with the VA Whole Health for potential inclusion for Veterans. My hope is that this evidence-based research study will be the beginning of a much larger study that will bring health, wholeness, and well-being to the multitudes.

Fear not, for I am with you;
Be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

The Prophet Isaiah⁶¹

⁶¹ Isaiah 41:10

APPENDIX A

LECTIO DIVINA PILOT PROJECT LESSON PLAN PART I

Plan Ref:	TL 2020-01	Course Ref:	Group/LD-01
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Subject / Course:	Introduction to the Daily Practice of Lectio Divina		
Topic:	An Ancient Christian Practice		
Title:	Daily Practice of Lectio Divina		
Level:	L1 – Step 1	Duration:	270 Minutes

Plan Objectives:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name the four movements of Lectio Divina and the importance of journaling. 2. Identify three characteristics of each of the four movements of Lectio Divina. 3. Understand the difference between individual Lectio Divina and group Lectio Divina. 4. Practice Lectio Divina with minimal assistance or help. 5. Find a renewed joy in connecting with God, self, and others.

Summary of Talks / Actions:
<p>Host: Open with welcome, house cleaning, and introductions. Use personalized lesson plan.</p> <p>Co-Host: Check-in participants from waiting room. Participants can participate if they have completed the 1) MBTI assessment, 2) Pilot Project Pretest, and 3) Signed voluntary participation consent form. Ensure participants have guide, handouts, and journal. Co-Host will create Break Out room with four participants each.</p>

Materials / Equipment
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zoom Schedule 2. Lesson Plans Part I & II 3. PowerPoint Presentation 4. Participant Guide, Handouts & Journal 5. Participant Roster 6. Co-Host

References:
<p>Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. <i>Spiritual Disciplines Handbook</i>. (Revised, Expanded Edition) Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015.; Casey, Michael. <i>Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina</i>, Liguori, MO: Liguori/Triumph, 1996.; Foster, Richard. <i>Devotional Classics</i>. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 2005.; Houston, James M. <i>The Transforming Power of Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship with God</i>. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1996.; Nouwen, Henri. <i>Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit</i>. New York, NY: Harper One Publishing, 2010.; Peace, Richard. <i>Meditative Prayer: Entering God's Presence</i>, Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 1998.; Peace, Richard. <i>Spiritual Formation Study Guides: Contemplative Bible Reading</i>. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1999.; Peterson, Eugene. <i>Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer</i>. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1991.; St. Benedict of Nursia. <i>The Rule of St. Benedict</i>. Collegeville, MN: Vintage Spiritual Classics, 1998.; Thomas, Gary. <i>Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.</p>

Take Home Tasks:
<p>Participants will be expected to attend all sessions, participate in each session, complete the daily assignments including journaling. Participants will be required to practice what they have learned at a minimum of five days a week for individual twenty-minute sessions including time for journaling. At the final session of the last day a copy of the participant's journal will be turned in and used as captured data. All participants will be encouraged to practice Lectio Divina five-days of the week.</p>

APPENDIX B

LECTIO DIVINA PILOT PROJECT LESSON PLAN PART II SESSION 1

Content / Theme: Introduction to the Daily Practice of *Lectio Divina*

SESSION ONE

1) Complementary Modalities

- Mindfulness
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- *Lectio Divina*

2) “Noticing” Exercise

3) *Lectio Divina* Movements

- Reading / Listening
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Contemplation
- ADDED: Journaling

SESSION TWO

1) Individual *Lectio Divina*

2) Group *Lectio Divina*

Series None

Resource(s):

Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*. (Revised, Expanded Edition) Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015.

Casey, Michael. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*, Liguori, MO: Liguori/Triumph, 1996.

Foster, Richard. *Devotional Classics*. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 2005.

Houston, James M. *The Transforming Power of Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship with God*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1996.

Nouwen, Henri. *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit*. New York, NY: Harper One Publishing, 2010.

Peace, Richard. *Meditative Prayer; Entering God's Presence*. Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 1998.

_____. *Spiritual Formation Study Guides: Contemplative Bible Reading*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1999.

Peterson, Eugene. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1991.

St. Benedict of Nursia. *The Rule of St. Benedict*. Collegeville, MN: Vintage Spiritual Classics, 1998.

Thomas, Gary. *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.

Benchmarks: N/A

Time: Session One – 120 Minutes

Session Two – 90 Minutes

Objectives: By the end of the 5-Day exploration, participants will be able to:

1. Name the four movements of *Lectio Divina* and the importance of journaling.
2. Identify three characteristics of each of the four movements of *Lectio Divina*.
3. Understand the difference between individual *Lectio Divina* and group *Lectio Divina*.
4. Practice *Lectio Divina* with minimal assistance or help.
5. Find a renewed joy in connecting with God, self, and others.

Facilitator Preparation / Materials:

1. Lesson Plan Part I
2. Lesson Plan Part II
3. PowerPoint Presentation
4. Participant Guide/Workbook
5. Participant One-Week Journal
6. Participant Miscellaneous Handouts (potential)
7. Each participant will need to provide their own fruit, bread, or tea for exercise

Activities:

1. “Noticing” Exercise
2. Individual *Lectio Divina* Break Out Sessions
3. Group *Lectio Divina* Break Out Sessions

WELCOME

Introductions

House Cleaning

Questions

CONTENT

Session One

Complementary Modalities

Noticing Exercise

Lectio Divina

Session Two

Check-In

Individual *Lectio Divina*

Group *Lectio Divina*

Follow-Up

Hypothesis:

Many individuals desire complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities, together for treatment and for the promotion of whole health and wellness. If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing *Lectio Divina* will reduce the bio-psycho-social-spiritual wounds, offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope, with a potential for redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.

PP 2

Intro: Name, Vocation, Family, Passion

HC: Needs

PP 3

PP 4

According to the Evidence-based Synthesis Program (ESP)
Center West Los Angeles VA
Medical Center Los Angeles,
CA

Paul G. Shekelle, MD, PhD,
Director - Evidence Map of
Mindfulness

COMPLEMENTARY MODALITIES

Many individuals desire complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities, both for treatment and for the promotion of wellness.

MINDFULNESS:

- Often translated from Sanskrit to mean “**awareness**,”
- It is an ancient Buddhist concept and, although many different forms and definitions exist, a central aspect of the practice is the intention to be more aware and engaged in the present moment.
- Two components can be differentiated: the self-regulation of attention so that it is maintained on immediate experiences (thereby allowing for increased recognition of mental events in the present moment) and adopting a particular orientation toward experiences in the present moment (an orientation that is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance).

In the American Medical Arena:

- Kabat-Zinn is often credited with popularizing mindfulness in the US by creating a mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program for treating chronic disease which created institutional capacity for using mindfulness-approaches in clinical settings.

PP5

PP6

What is your desire?

What is available?

PP7

TAI CHI:

PP8

- Incorporates the Chinese concepts of yin and yang, which represent two opposing, yet complementary forces described in traditional Chinese medicine
- Tai Chi, also known as T'ai chi ch'uan or Taijiquan, developed as an ancient Chinese martial art and today is widely practiced for its health benefits.
- Many forms of Tai Chi exist, but in Western culture, it is most commonly taught as a series of slow, gentle, low-impact movements that integrate the breath, the mind, and physical activity to achieve greater awareness and a sense of inner peace and well-being.
- **Yin and Yang:** The underlying premise is that good health is achieved by balancing these opposing forces. Tai Chi is designed to strengthen and stretch the body, improve the flow of blood and other fluids throughout the body, and improve balance. There is no official licensure granted by national or state professional boards, and there are no official standards for training instructors. Rather, students are taught by a master, and then teach with the master's approval. Thus, training programs vary.

YOGA:

PP9

- Is a term used to describe a collection of spiritual and physical practices originating in ancient India and used to cultivate deep meditative states in order to achieve greater union with the divine or true self.
- Sometime around the second or third century CE, the 8-limbed path of yoga (Ashtanga yoga) was first documented, which includes the following practices: 1) Yama, or ethical restraints; 2) Niyama, or personal observances; 3) Asana, or physical exercises; 4) Pranayama, or mastery of breath; 5) Pratyahara, or sense withdrawal; 6) Dharana, or concentration; 7) Dhyana, or meditation; and 8) Samadhi, translated as ecstasy or nondualistic consciousness.
- By the 15th century, teachings describing the physical and mental aspects of yoga as purification practices in the context of Hinduism were compiled into a series of texts which include the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Shiva Samhita, and Gherenda Samhita. The modern conception of Hatha yoga, which is most broadly associated with yoga in the west, derives from these texts.
- In recent decades, numerous fitness-oriented yoga regimens, such as Power yoga, Yogafit, and Bikram yoga, have also gained popularity, particularly in the United States.

LECTIO DIVINA:

PP10

- Translated from Latin to mean “Divine Reading” is an ancient Christian practice of scriptural reading, prayer, meditation, and contemplation to promote communion with God.
- In Western Christianity (such as the Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Catholic Church, Lutheran Church, Anglican Church, Episcopal Church and many other Christian Churches) *Lectio Divina* (Latin for "Divine Reading") is a traditional monastic practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word.

“NOTICING” EXERCISE

PP11

- Select one of the following:
 - A piece of fruit
 - A slice of bread
 - A cup of tea

PP12

- Let us use our five senses

- **This is a refresher on “Noticing”**

PP13

Sight: What do you see?

Scripture Verse:

Luke 18:41, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let me recover my sight.”

Touch: What do you feel?

Scripture Verse:

1 John 1:1, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.”

Smell: What do you smell?

Scripture Verse:

2 Corinthians 2:15a, “For we are the aroma of Christ to God.”

Hearing: What do you hear?

Scripture Verse:

Psalms 34:11, “Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”

Romans 10:17, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

Taste: What do you taste?

Scripture Verse:

Psalms 34:8a, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!”

Q: How might we use our five senses when practicing *Lectio Divina*?

LECTIO DIVINA

PP14

- Pronounced: lex-ee-oh di-vee-nuh
- Translated from Latin to mean: “**Divine Reading**,” “Spiritual Reading,” “Sacred Reading.”
- *Lectio Divina* is broken down into the following four movements (Movements are in Latin):
 - **Lectio** (reading),
 - **Meditatio** (meditation),
 - **Oratio** (prayer),
 - and **Contemplatio** (contemplation).
- Then, as a result of the encounter with God in Scripture, we are also called to **Actio** (action).
 - **Actio** (Journaling)

QUOTE:

Michael Casey

Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina

“The Bible is an instrument of salvation only because it challenges our habitual beliefs, attitudes, and behavior.”

“*Lectio Divina* is one concrete means of opening ourselves to the actions of grace and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.”

OVERVIEW OF *LECTIO DIVINA*

Prepare to Read / Listen

- Find a quiet place so you are not distracted.
- Sit in silence with your eyes closed.
- Straighten your back, but let your body relax.
- Let your weight rest beneath you where you are sitting.
- Relax your face, throat, and neck.
- Relax your shoulders, arms, and chest.
- Relax your stomach, and hips.
- Relax your legs and feet.
- Imagine any stress, anxiety, or tension leaving your body as you relax and concentrate on your breathing.
- Listen to your breath as you breathe in and out.
- Inhale deeply, listen to your breath as it enters your body.
- Exhale slowly, and relax.

Using a Breath Prayer to Help Relax

- Focus on the Triune God.
- Say a simple breath prayer as you breathe in and out, such as “Come, Lord Jesus, I am here.”
- When you breathe in say the first portion of the prayer – “Come, Lord Jesus.”
- When you breathe out say the last portion of the prayer – “I am here.”
- As you sit in silence and solitude ask the Holy Spirit to open the Scriptures to you so you can see and hear the words or phrase specifically for you.
- As you invite the Triune God into your presence, ask God for his presence and protection.
- Present your concerns to God by seeing yourself laying them at the feet of Jesus.
- Now that your concerns are placed in God’s care, focus solely on the Triune God.

PP15

PP16

- Bible in Hand
- Know what Book
- Location
- Lighting

FIRST MOVEMENT

Read / Listen

- Develop a routine of reading / listening of Scripture daily for twenty-minutes.

- Start with the *Book of Psalms* or select any other sixty-six books that complete the Bible.
 - Read the book from front to back.

Quote from Eugene Peterson from his book, *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*.

“If we wish to develop in the life of faith, to mature in our humanity, and to glorify God with our entire heart, mind, soul, and strength, the Psalms are necessary. We cannot bypass the Psalms. They are God’s gift to train us in prayer....”

- While reading or listening when you sense the Holy Spirit directing your attention to a word or phrase finish reading that paragraph or chapter while noting the section.

- Write down the section, the word or phrase, and reread that area three more times taking your time mulling over each word as one does when reading a love letter.

- The next step is to STOP reading / listening and move to the next movement of *Lectio Divina*.

PP17

PP18

PP19

Scripture Reference

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. – **Romans 10:17**

And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. – **Nehemiah 8:3**

When all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing. – **Deuteronomy 31:11**

Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. – **1 Timothy 4:13**

Lectio (Reading)

- In the first movement of *Lectio Divina* we let the Scripture stand on its own.
- We attempt to place ourselves in the setting using all our five senses as one of the first hearers.
- We read/listen with the *literal meaning* of the Scripture passage in mind.
- During this movement we invite the Holy Spirit to bring to our attention a word or phrase.

PP20

- Here is where we sit with what the Holy Spirit has shown us.
- Try not to consider your journey in connection with the Scripture just yet.
- Again do not try to analyze the reading but rather seek to understand the message of the passage as a first hearer.

Scripture Selection?

PP21

Quote from Michael Casey in his book -- *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*

“*Lectio Divina* is sober, long term undertaking and, as such, better reflected in sustained attention to whole books than in seeking a quick fix from selected texts.”

- Recommended to start in the ***Book of Psalms***.
- No matter where one starts, read starting from first chapter first verse end at the last chapter last verse.
- Notice the difference between reading for information and reading for formation.

- Reading without verbalizing and reading with verbalizing
- Active reading rather passive reading

Quote from Michael Casey in his book -- *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*

“If our normal reading has become no more than a rapid scanning of the page with a view to extracting its “essential” content, we will probably need to be reeducated if we are to improve our skills of sacred reading.”

BREAK TIME

PP22

Take 10 Minutes

Second Movement - Meditation

PP23

MEDITATION DEFINITION

Nelson's Dictionary of Christianity (P145)

“Quiet time spent in contemplating the Word of God and in fumigating the mind of the toxic thoughts and ideas that infiltrate it every day.”

“Private devotion or spiritual exercise focused on a religious theme.”

“Spoken or written contemplative discourse delving into spiritual things.”

The Upper Room Dictionary of Christian Spiritual Formation (P190)

“Meditation in this restricted sense of discursive or conversational mental prayer is the second stage in *Lectio Divina*, the time of reflecting on a passage or scripture, whether through thinking about the meaning, identifying with a character, or using guided imagery.”

- The difference I see between Meditation and Compilation is “Focus” of the subject matter.
- Meditation is when we come to God and Compilation is when God comes to us in simple terms.
- Another way of saying it is that we approach God and God approaches us.
- We reach out to God or we wait on God. Active approach verses passive approach.

PP24

Meditate

PP25

- Focus on the word or phrase you heard from the Holy Spirit.
- Reread that portion of Scripture slowly and with intention looking at each word individually.
- What memory is this triggering?
- What emotion is this touching?
- What does this word or phrase say to me, today, and to my life?

Scripture Reference:

PP26

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” – **Joshua 1:8**

Q: In the second movement of *Lectio Divina*, ask yourself:

- What does this text say to me today?
 - What does this word say to my life?
- Here is where we sit with what word or phrase the Holy Spirit had shown us.
- During this time it is normal to recall certain memories of people, places, things, and events in our life that relate to the passage we just read.
- With this movement not only do we see ourselves in the text as a first hearer, but we see ourselves as living and interacting with others in the text.
- Here you should notice and identify your own feelings and consider what the first hearers could have felt. Place yourself in the shoes of the biblical figure and try to understand what it would be like to be one of the people represented in the text.
- Having entered the story return now to the present and consider the areas in your life God is calling you to see and confront.

THIRD MOVEMENT

PP28

PRAYER

PP29

- Communication with God through thoughts, words, and gestures whereby we express what we believe about God and our relationship to God and to one another
- Prayer is opening of ourselves to God.
- Prayer is the natural language of the soul.
- Prayer is our response to a divine invitation to encounter.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

PP30

Oratio (Prayer)

PP31

When we meditate on the Word of God, we experience an intimate and sacred encounter with the Triune God.

This experience draws us to respond – with prayer.

1. Speak to God with what is on your heart that came from the Scripture of the day's reading.
2. Share the word or phrase you sense the Holy Spirit directing your attention to.

3. Ask God to show you any and all barriers or blind spots in your life and for help removing those.
4. Tell God how you love him.
5. Thank God for all your blessings.

QUOTES

“Communication with God through thoughts, words, and gestures whereby we express what we believe about God and our relationship to God and to one another.”

- *The Upper Room Dictionary of Christian Spiritual Formation*

“Prayer is the act of seeing reality from God’s point of view.”

– Philip Yancy *Prayer: Does it Make any Difference?*

“Prayer, as a classical spiritual discipline, is primarily relational, not functional.

- M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*.

“Prayer is the act by which we divest ourselves of all false belongings and become free to belong to God and God alone.”

– Henri Nouwen *Letting God of All Things*, Sojourners, May 1979 p6.

PP32

FOURTH MOVEMENT

PP33

CONTEMPLATION

Quote

PP34

And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.

– 1 Kings 19:12

PP35

Meditative Prayer by Richard Peace

- “The words of meditation and contemplation often are used interchangeably. Meditation is different from contemplation. They also can be used to describe quite different processes.”
 - “Meditation is active, involving words, images, and activities. This includes filling our minds with images.”
 - “Contemplation involves letting go of all conscious mental and physical activity so as to rest in God’s presence, which is a place without form or image. This involves emptying our minds of images.”

- “So in meditation we respond to God out of what we see and hear and feel. Whereas in contemplation, we rest silently in the presence of God.”

The Upper Room Dictionary

“In Christian spirituality, contemplation refers to the focused attention of the soul toward the Divine.

Contemplation is about the interior life of prayer that yearns to see and know God as God is, to experience a pure union with God, and to be absorbed by God’s all-consuming infinite love.”

Contemplatio (Contemplation)

- A true encounter with the Lord always leads to transformation.

Indeed, the Lord God proclaimed, “Behold, I make all things new.” – Revelation 21:5

PP36

- Through contemplation we come to an understanding of the parts of our lives that need to be transformed by God’s grace.
- We humble ourselves and open our lives up to his transformative power.
- This step comes with the willingness to change, an openness and trust in God, and the decision to follow God’s will rather than our own.

PP37

- With this decision comes a fear of losing what we find comfortable and safe.
- At the same time we feel the excitement of a call to heroic adventure and a hopeful future of living the life we are meant to live.
- At this step in the *Lectio Divina* process, we ask ourselves: What conversion of the mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?

Refresher

PP38

LECTIO DIVINA AS FOUR CLASSIC PRAYER PATHS:

- **Lectio** Prayer as attending
- **Meditatio** Prayer as pondering
- **Oratio** Prayer as responding
- **Contemplatio** Prayer as being

FIFTH MOVEMENT

PP39

JOURNALING

PP40

Journaling/ Actio (Action)

- This movement is not officially considered to be part of *Lectio Divina*; however, it is essential.
- It is an essential act directly due to the encounter with God during this sacred time in Scripture.

- Keeping a spiritual journal helps us take the road inward to discover who and whose we are.
- As we write, the ambiguity of human experience with its hidden desires and impulses is revealed.
- A written record of feelings, thoughts, and events as they relate to and affect the inter life.
- Helps one to see where God is leading in one's life.
- Names struggles, barriers, feelings, and potential blind spots (dark night of the soul) and brings to light.

Quote:

The Sayings of the Desert Fathers

The nature of water is soft, that of stone is hard; but if a bottle is hung above the stone, allowing the water to fall drop by drop, it wears away the stone. So it is with the word of God; it is soft and our heart is hard, but the [one] who hears the word of God often, opens his heart to the fear of God.

End of Day One

- Questions
- Comments
- Concerns

PP41

Benedicta Ward (trans.), *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (CS59), Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, MI, 1975, P 162, 183.

PP42

BRIEF INDIVIDUAL *LECTIO DIVINA*

- Schedule daily time for *Lectio Divina* (Recommend 20-minutes)
- Find a sacred space that offers silence and solitude
- Prepare yourself by relaxing and opening with a breath prayer
- Start reading in the Book of Psalms (6 to 8 verses)
- Read Scripture slowly a number of times through noticing a word or phrase (four minutes)
- Meditate (four minutes)
- Pray (four minutes)
- Contemplate (four minutes)
- Journal (four minutes)

APPENDIX C

LECTIO DIVINA PILOT PROJECT LESSON PLAN PART II SESSION 2

Content / Theme: Introduction to the Daily Practice of *Lectio Divina*

SESSION ONE

1) Complementary Modalities

- Mindfulness
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- *Lectio Divina*

2) “Noticing” Exercise

3) *Lectio Divina* Movements

- Reading / Listening
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Contemplation
- ADDED: Journaling

SESSION TWO

1) Individual *Lectio Divina*

2) Group *Lectio Divina*

Series None

Resource(s):

Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*. (Revised, Expanded Edition) Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015.

Casey, Michael. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*, Liguori, MO: Liguori/Triumph, 1996.

Foster, Richard. *Devotional Classics*. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 2005.

Houston, James M. *The Transforming Power of Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship with God*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1996.

Nouwen, Henri. *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit*. New York, NY: Harper One Publishing, 2010.

Peace, Richard. *Meditative Prayer; Entering God's Presence*. Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 1998.

_____. *Spiritual Formation Study Guides: Contemplative Bible Reading*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1999.

Peterson, Eugene. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1991.

St. Benedict of Nursia. *The Rule of St. Benedict*. Collegeville, MN: Vintage Spiritual Classics, 1998.

Thomas, Gary. *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.

Benchmarks: N/A

Time: Session One – 120 Minutes

Session Two – 120 Minutes

Objectives: By the end of the 5-Day exploration, participants will be able to:

1. Name the four movements of *Lectio Divina* and the importance of journaling.
2. Identify three characteristics each of the four movements of *Lectio Divina*.
3. Understand the difference between individual *Lectio Divina* and group *Lectio Divina*.
4. Practice *Lectio Divina* with minimal assistance or help.
5. Find a renewed joy in connecting with God, self, and others.

Facilitator Preparation / Materials:

1. Lesson Plan Part I
2. Lesson Plan Part II
3. PowerPoint Presentation
4. Participant Guide/Workbook
5. Participant One-Week Journal
6. Participant Miscellaneous Handouts (potential)
7. Each participant will need to provide their own fruit, bread, or tea for exercise

Activities:

1. "Noticing" Exercise
2. Individual *Lectio Divina* Break Out Sessions
3. Group *Lectio Divina* Break Out Sessions

WELCOME BACK

House Cleaning

PP 2

CONTENT

PP 3

Session One

Complementary Modalities

Noticing Exercise

Lectio Divina

Session Two

Check-In

Individual *Lectio Divina*

Group *Lectio Divina*

Follow-Up

Check-In

PP 4

1. My Daily *Lectio Divina* time with God is going?
2. One area that is going well with practicing *Lectio Divina* is?
3. One barrier I face with practicing *Lectio Divina* is?
4. Overall I would like to share?

Hypothesis:

If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing *Lectio Divina* will reduce the bio-psycho-social-spiritual wounds, offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope, with a potential for redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.

Quote:

The Sayings of the Desert Fathers

The nature of water is soft, that of stone is hard; but if a bottle is hung above the stone, allowing the water to fall drop by drop, it wears away the stone. So it is with the word of God; it is soft and our heart is hard, but the [one] who hears the word of God often, opens his heart to the fear of God.

Brief Individual *Lectio Divina*

- Schedule daily time for *Lectio Divina* (Recommend 20-minutes)
- Find a sacred space that offers silence and solitude
- Prepare yourself by relaxing and opening with a breath prayer
- Start reading in the *Book of Psalms* (6 to 8 verses)
- Read Scripture slowly for at least three times through noticing a word or phrase (four minutes)
- Meditate (four minutes)
- Pray (four minutes)
- Contemplate (four minutes)
- Journal (four minutes)

PP5

PP6

Benedicta Ward (trans.),
The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection (CS59),
Cistercian Publications,
Kalamazoo, MI, 1975, P
162, 183

PP7 - REMINDER

SESSION 2

Individual *Lectio Divina*

1) Four *Lectio Divina* Movements – As Prayers

- **Lectio** Prayer as Attending Social

This is foundational for starters. Prayer should begin as attentive openness and expectancy.

God created us in His image (Genesis 1:27) and being social is one of the attributes of the Trinity.

- **Meditatio** Prayer as Pondering Psycho

A head and heart activity. It involves both. Ponder – muse.

Psychological/Emotional – our thinking pattern impacts our behavior and our emotions.

- **Oratio** Prayer as Responding Spiritual

Oratio (prayer) is how we respond to God's invitation. The Word stirring our heart causes us to pray.

The spiritual aspect is focused on the process of sanctification and growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18)

- **Contemplatio** Prayer as Being Bio

Resting in the presence of God. Not doing...just being.

The Bible calls our bodies the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). God wants us to be good stewards of our bodies and treat them as the place He resides.

- **Journaling** Prayer as Sharing Soul

PP8

PP9

PP10

Lectio – waiting for the still small voice of God.

What word or phrase does God have for me today?

Eugene talks about muse.

What we focus our mind on can and does cause good or bad.

2) Four *Lectio Divina* Movements – As Metaphors

PP11

First reading: Head

What does the Holy Spirit draw your attention to – what word or phrase resonates? Notice it and pray it back to God.

Second reading: Heart

What is going on inside you as you sit with whatever you noticed? What are you *feeling* as the Holy Spirit stirs God's word deep into your soul? Notice it, and talk with God about it.

Third reading: Habit

(from Latin "habitus", character) How might whatever you are noticing reflect what the Holy Spirit is praying in you and for you? What is God calling you to, in being or in doing?

Rest: [Hiatus]

Rest in God's arms, "like a weaned child with its mother" (Psalm 131:2), enjoying his loving embrace.

Group *Lectio Divina*

Facilitator Role & Participant Role

GROUP PREPARATION

FACILITATOR

- Center Down
- Breath Prayer
- Read Scripture
- Group Inquire

PARTICIPANTS

- Following Instructions
- Sit Silently
- Speak when it is Your Turn
- Pray when it is Your Turn

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

Facilitator: (Read the following words aloud and slowly)

- Find a comfortable place to sit in solitude and silence.
- I invite you to sit in silence with your eyes closed.
- With your back straightened up, your weight completely resting where you sit, allowing your body to relax as best as possible.
- As you breath, focus on the rhythm of your breathing.

PP12

PP13

PP14

“Center Down” is a 17th Century Quakerspeak for the technique of becoming quiet and still and silent as the Meeting moves into silence. “

Settle Down

PP15

PP16

Breath Prayer

Facilitator: (Read the following words aloud and slowly)

- I invite you to say a prayer as you breathe in and out.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you with calming your body, mind, and spirit.
- I encourage you to lay all your concerns at this moment in the hands of God.
- Ask the Father to surround you with his love and presence.

SCRIPTURE: *Psalm 23*

Facilitator: (Read the following words aloud and slowly)

- *The first time I read, listen to the Word of God for a word or phrase that touches you.*

Participants:

- Participants sit in silence with eyes closed listening to the Scripture being read aloud and allowing the Holy Spirit to help them notice a word or phrase for their spiritual journey.

Facilitator: (After a brief pause, read the Scripture passage aloud again, slowly.)

- Before the reading the facilitator will:
 - invite the participants to listen to the Word of God for a word or phrase

PP17

PP18/19

PP20/21

- Reading of the Psalm a Second Time.
- After the reading the facilitator will:
 - encourage them to share in the group their word or phrase

Note: Please keep phrase to no more than three words

PP22

Facilitator: (Ask the group to repeat to themselves [silently] the word or phrase that touched them. Allow one minute of silence. After silence, say the following:)

PP23

Let us share our word or phrase.

(Facilitator will then begin by sharing aloud their word or phrase.

Participants:

PP24/25

- After the Facilitator shares their word, the participants are encouraged to share as they feel able their word or phrase.

Facilitator: (After all have been given an opportunity to share, read the Scripture passage aloud one final time)

PP26

Reading of the Psalm a Third Time.

- Before the reading the facilitator will:
 - invite the participants to listen to the Word of God for a word or phrase
- After the reading the facilitator will:
 - encourage them to share in more detail in the group about their word or phrase

Facilitator: (Ask the group to repeat to themselves [silently] the word or phrase that touched them. Allow one minute of silence. After silence, say the following:)

PP27

Let us share in more detail about our word or phrase.

(Facilitator will then begin by sharing.)

Participants:

PP28

- After the Facilitator shares, the participants are encouraged to share as they feel able about their word or phrase.

Facilitator: (After all have been given an opportunity to share, request each person pray aloud one at a time, for their neighbor. Facilitator will start.) (Left or Right)

Group *LECTIO DIVINA* Exercise

PP29

PSALM 4

PP30

Handout with Scripture

BREAK OUT - GROUPS

- **Participant 1: Group Facilitator**
- Participant 2: Group Member
- Participant 3: Group Member
- Participant 4: Group Member

PP31

PP32

Psalm 16:1-6

Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

End of Day

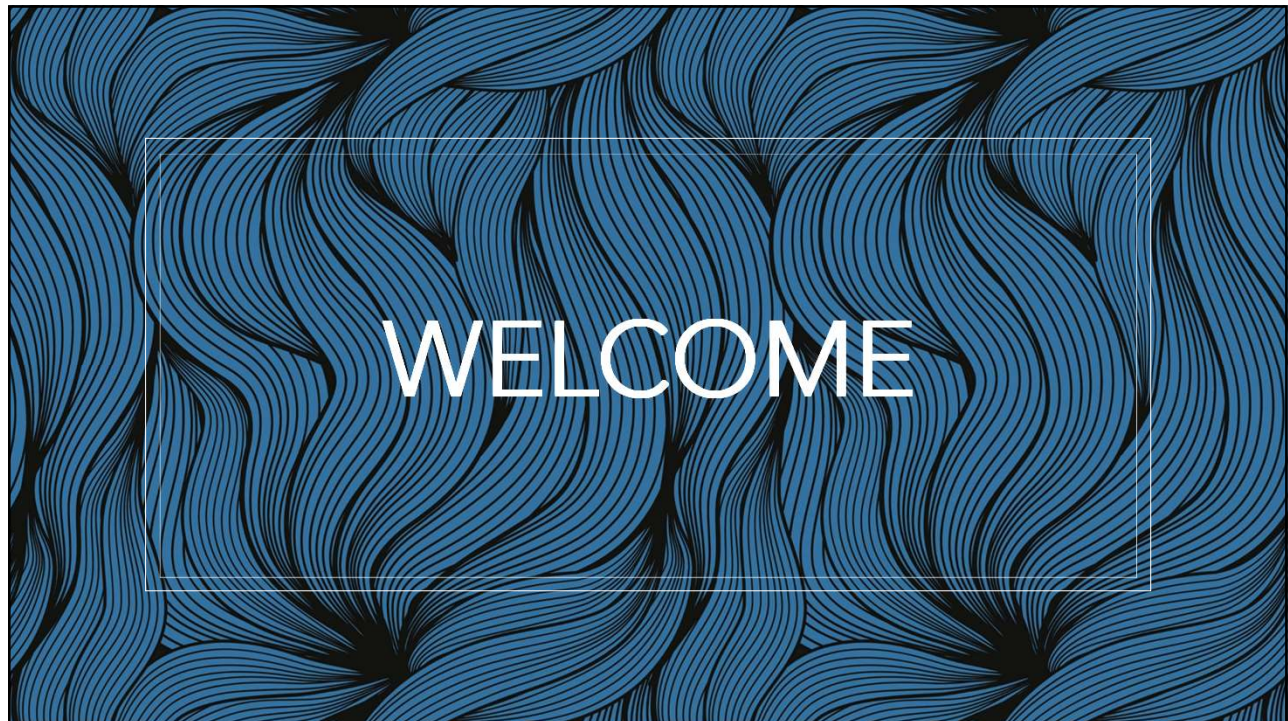
Questions?

APPENDIX D

LESSON PLAN PART II SESSION 1 SLIDE DECK



1



2

CONTENT	
SESSION I (Monday) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Complementary Modalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Mindfulness ◦ Tai Chi ◦ Yoga ◦ <i>Lectio Divina</i> ◦ "Noticing" Exercise ◦ <i>Lectio Divina</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Reading / Listening ◦ Meditation ◦ Prayer ◦ Contemplation ◦ ADDED: Journaling 	SESSION II (Wednesday) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Check-In ◦ Session 1 Review ◦ Individual <i>Lectio Divina</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Four Movements ◦ Four Metaphors ◦ Group <i>Lectio Divina</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Facilitator Role ◦ Participant Role ◦ Demonstration ◦ Practice Visio Divina & Audio Divina <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Depending on Time Follow-up

3

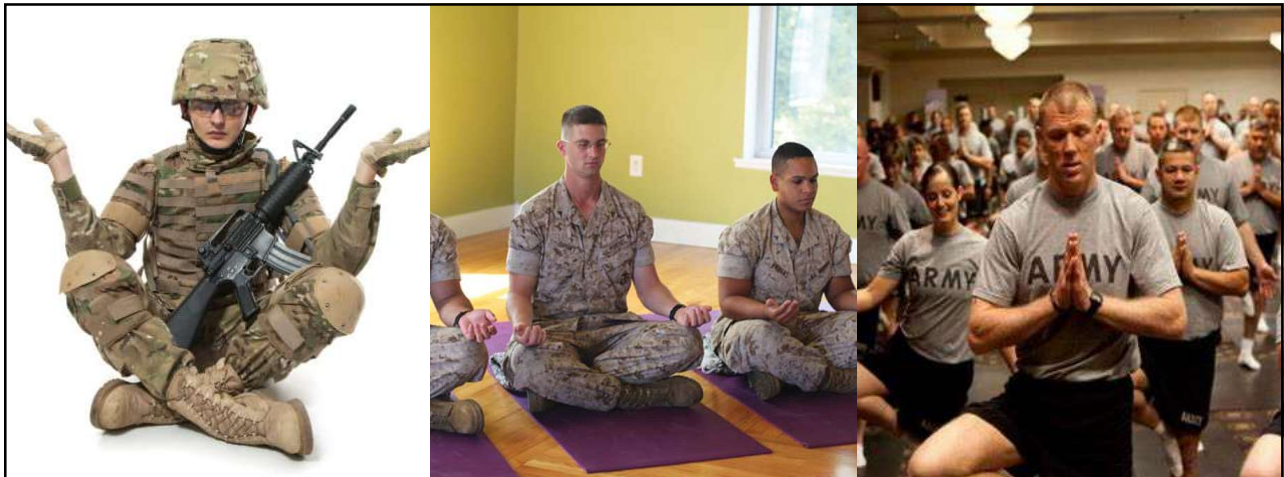
Hypothesis:	<p>Many individuals desire complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities, together for treatment and for the promotion of whole health and wellness. ¹</p> <p>If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing <i>Lectio Divina</i> will reduce the bio-psycho-social-spiritual wounds, offering a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope, with a potential for redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.</p>
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4

SESSION ONE


COMPLEMENTARY MODALITIES

5



MANY INDIVIDUALS DESIRE COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE OR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE MODALITIES, BOTH FOR TREATMENT AND FOR THE PROMOTION OF WELLNESS.

6



Department of Veterans Affairs
Health Services Research & Development Service

Evidence-based Synthesis Program

QUERI

Evidence Map of Mindfulness

October 2014


Prepared for:
Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative
Health Services Research & Development Service
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Prepared by:
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Stephanie L. Taylor, PhD
Neil J. Marshall, PhD
Michelle R. Solloway, PhD

Research Associates:
Isom M. Mikule-Lys, BA
Jessica M. Berres, BS
Roberta Shanman, MS



MINDFULNESS, OFTEN TRANSLATED FROM SANSKRIT TO MEAN "AWARENESS," IS AN ANCIENT BUDDHIST CONCEPT.

7



Department of Veterans Affairs
Health Services Research & Development Service

Evidence-based Synthesis Program

QUERI

Evidence Map of Tai Chi

September 2014

Prepared for:
Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative
Health Services Research & Development Service
Washington, DC 20420

Prepared by:
Evidence-based Synthesis Program (ESP) Center
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Los Angeles, CA
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TAI CHI INCORPORATES THE CHINESE CONCEPTS OF YIN AND YANG, WHICH REPRESENT TWO OPPOSING, YET COMPLEMENTARY FORCES DESCRIBED IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

8



Department of Veterans Affairs
Health Services Research and Development Service

Evidence-based Synthesis Program

QUERI
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

Evidence Map of Yoga for High-Impact Conditions Affecting Veterans

August 2014

Prepared for:
Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative
Health Services Research and Development Service
Washington, DC 20420

Prepared by:
Evidence-based Synthesis Program (ESPI) Center
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Hilary Minnells, B.A.
John W. Williams, Jr., M.D., M.H.Sc.

Research Associates:
Anvishk Nagi, M.S.



YOGA IS A TERM USED TO DESCRIBE A COLLECTION OF SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL PRACTICES ORIGINATING IN ANCIENT INDIA AND USED TO CULTIVATE DEEP MEDITATIVE STATES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE GREATER UNION WITH THE DIVINE OR TRUE SELF.

9



Transformational Living, Inc. | Evidence-based Pilot Project

Evidence Map Of Lectio Divina

May 2021


Prepared for:
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Prepared by:
Transformational Living, Inc.
Research Section
China Village, ME
Kenneth L. Hellmer, M.Div., BCC, President

Investigators:
Principal Investigator:
Kenneth L. Hellmer, M.Div.

Co-Investigator:
R. Neil Farrar, D.Min., (ABD)

Research Associates:
Priscilla Mondt, Ph.D.
Steve Salisbury, M.Div.




LECTIO DIVINA TRANSLATED FROM LATIN TO MEAN "DIVINE READING" IS AN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRACTICE OF SCRIPTURAL READING, PRAYER, MEDITATION, AND CONTEMPLATION TO PROMOTE COMMUNION WITH GOD.

10

NOTICING
Exercise

(Select One)



FRUIT




BREAD




TEA

11


Our Five Senses




SIGHT




TOUCH



SMELL



HEARING



TASTE

12

Our Five Senses

- **Sight:** What do you see?
- **Touch:** What do you feel?
- **Smell:** What do you smell?
- **Hearing:** What do you hear?
- **Taste:** What do you taste?

13

Lectio Divina



Four-Part Movement

- Read / Listen
- Meditate
- Pray
- Contemplate

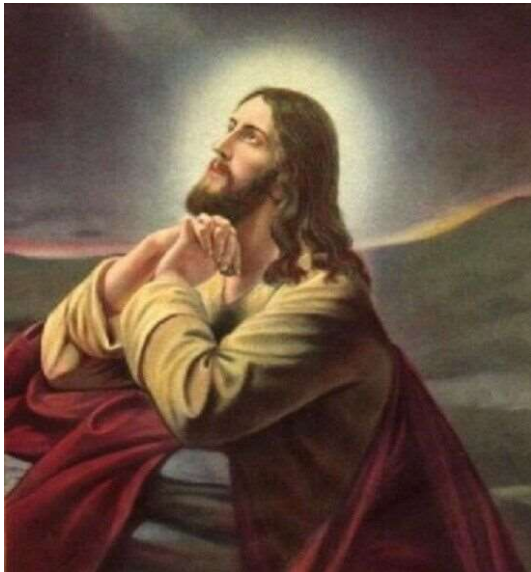
Additional Movement

- Journal

14

INDIVIDUAL *LECTIO DIVINA*

15



Prepare

- Have your Bible ready
- Know what Scripture you plan to read
- Find a quiet and secluded space
- Have good light for reading
- Quiet your mind, body, and spirit
- Use your breath prayer to help relax
- Pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit

16

FIRST MOVEMENT

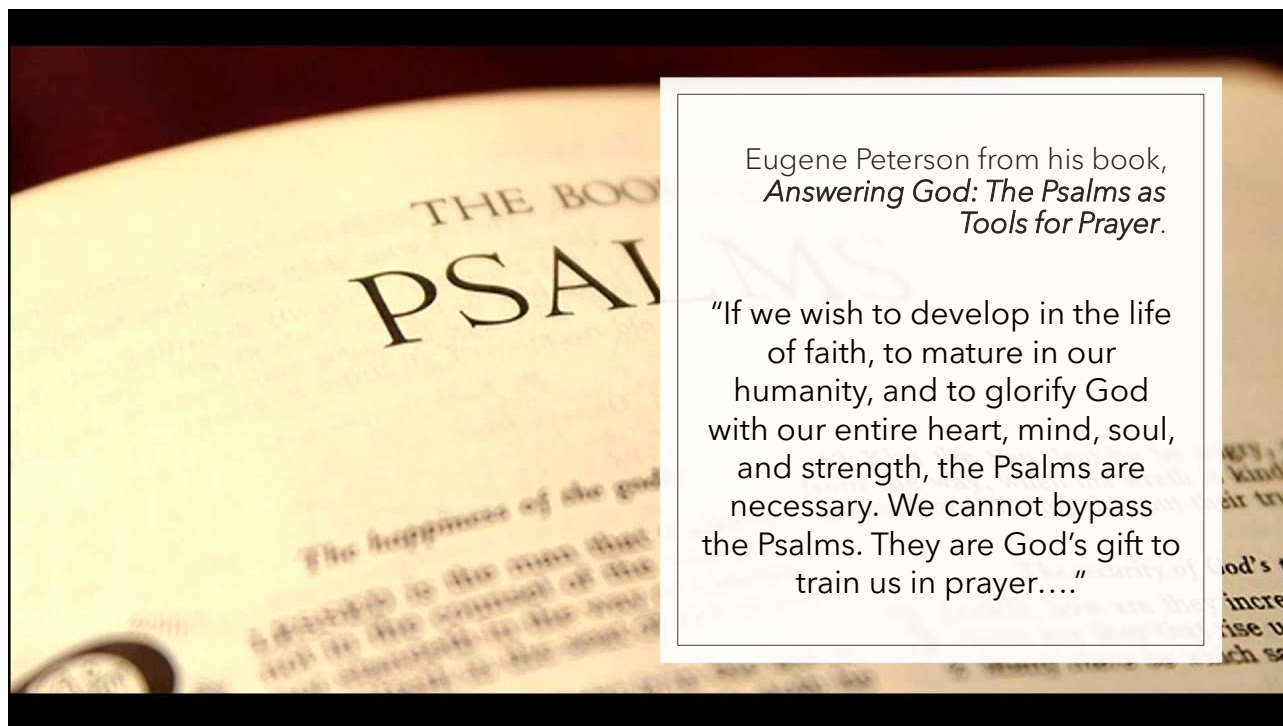
Reading / Listening

17

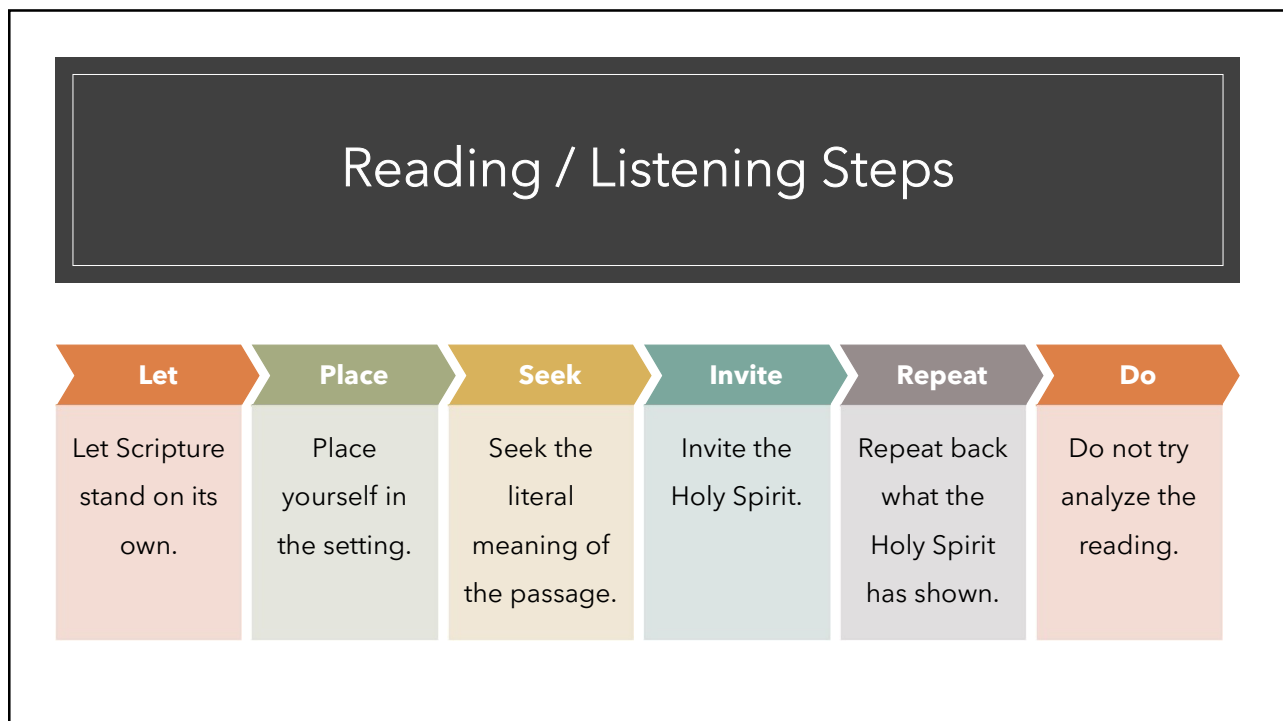
Reading / Listening

- Develop a routine of reading / listening of Scripture daily for twenty-minutes
- Start with the *Book of Psalms* or select one of the sixty-six books
- Read the book from front to back
- While reading or listening when you sense the Holy Spirit directing your attention to a word or phrase **STOP** reading / listening and move to the next movement of *Lectio Divina*

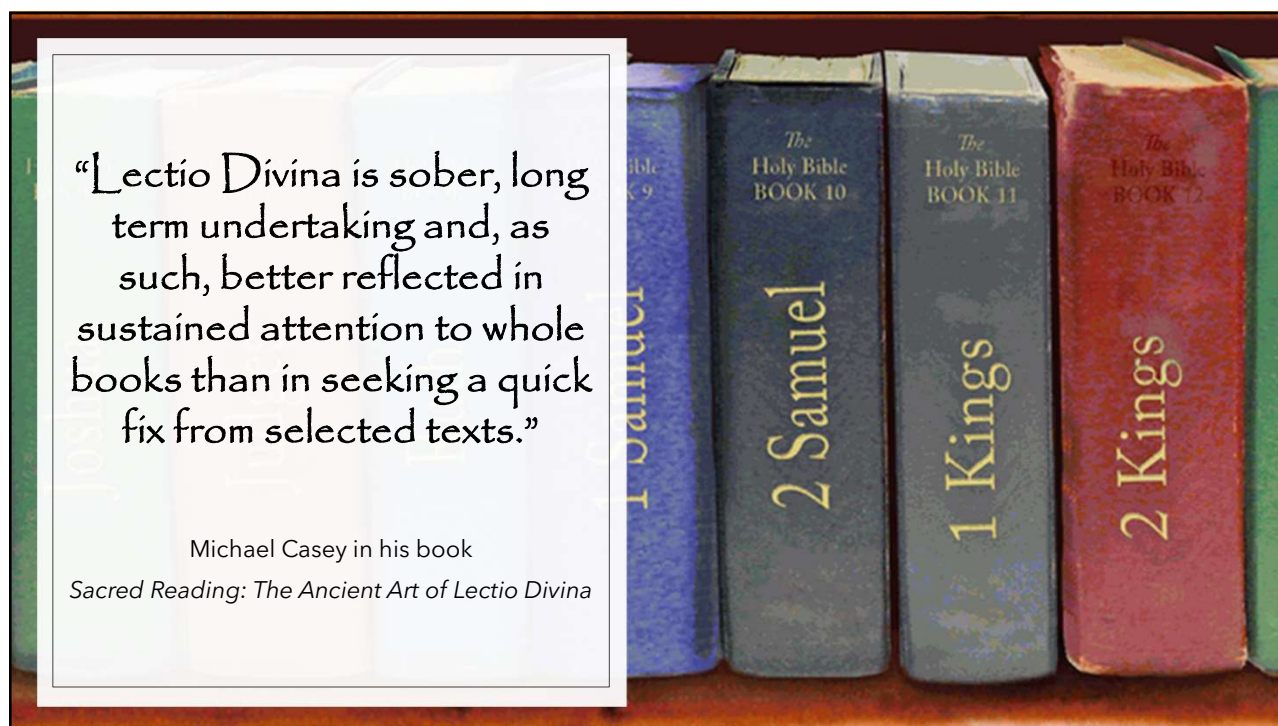
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19



20



21



22

SECOND MOVEMENT

Meditation

23

The Upper Room Dictionary of Christian
Spiritual Formation

"Meditation in this restricted sense of discursive or conversational mental prayer is the second stage in *Lectio divina*, the time of reflecting on a passage or scripture, whether through thinking about the meaning, identifying with a character, or using guided imagery."

24

Meditation

- Focus on the word or phrase you heard from the Holy Spirit
- Reread that portion of Scripture slowly and with intention looking at each word individually
- What memory is this triggering?
- What emotion is this touching?
- What does this word or phrase say to me, today, and to my life?

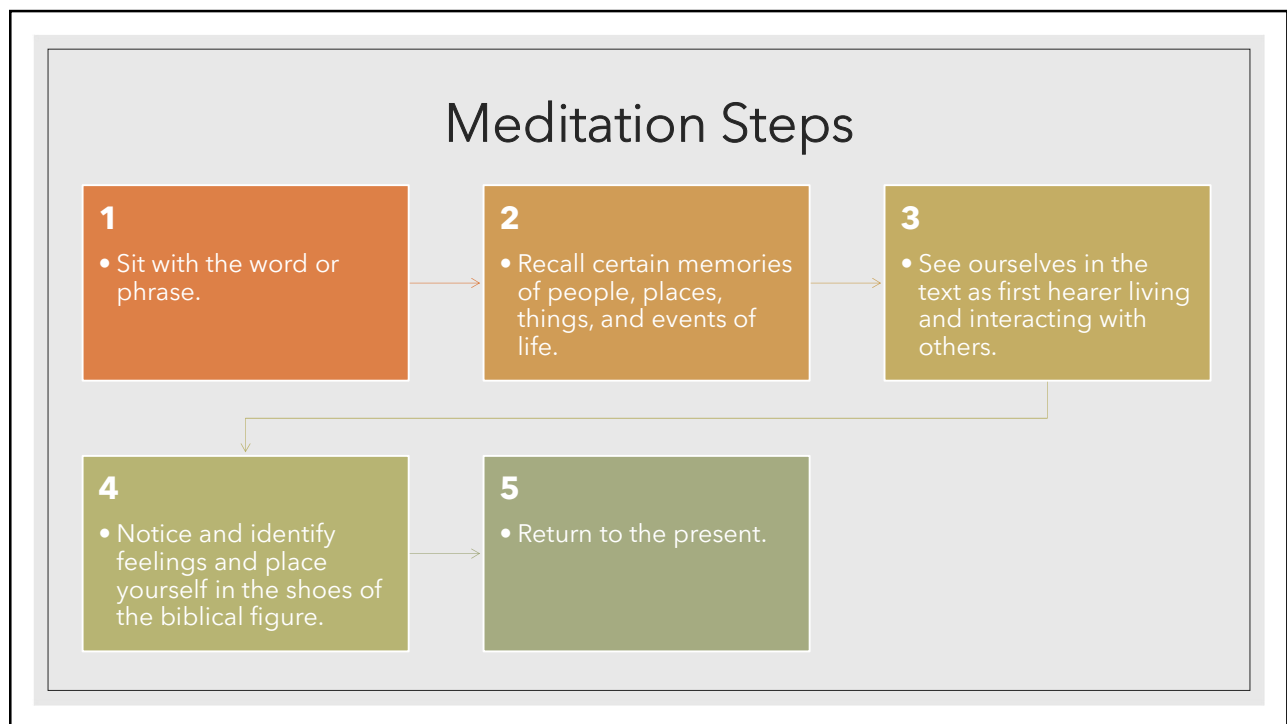


25



"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. "

26



27



28



PRAYER

- Communication with God through thoughts, words, and gestures whereby we express what we believe about God and our relationship to God and to one another
- Prayer is opening of ourselves to God
- Prayer is the natural language of the soul
- Prayer is our response to a divine invitation to encounter

29



1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

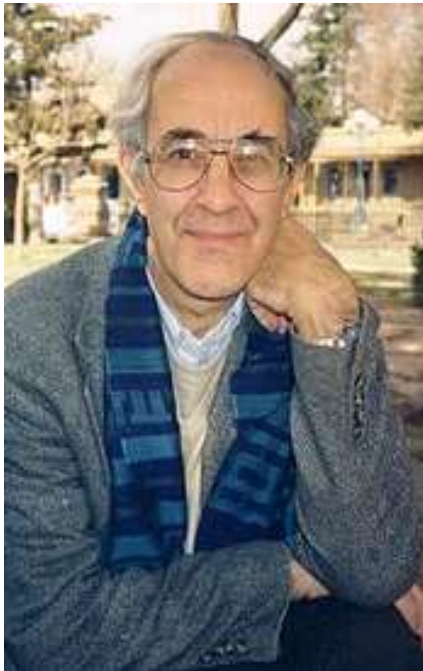
Rejoice always,
pray without
ceasing, give
thanks in all
circumstances; for
this is the will of
God in Christ
Jesus for you.

30

Prayer Steps



31



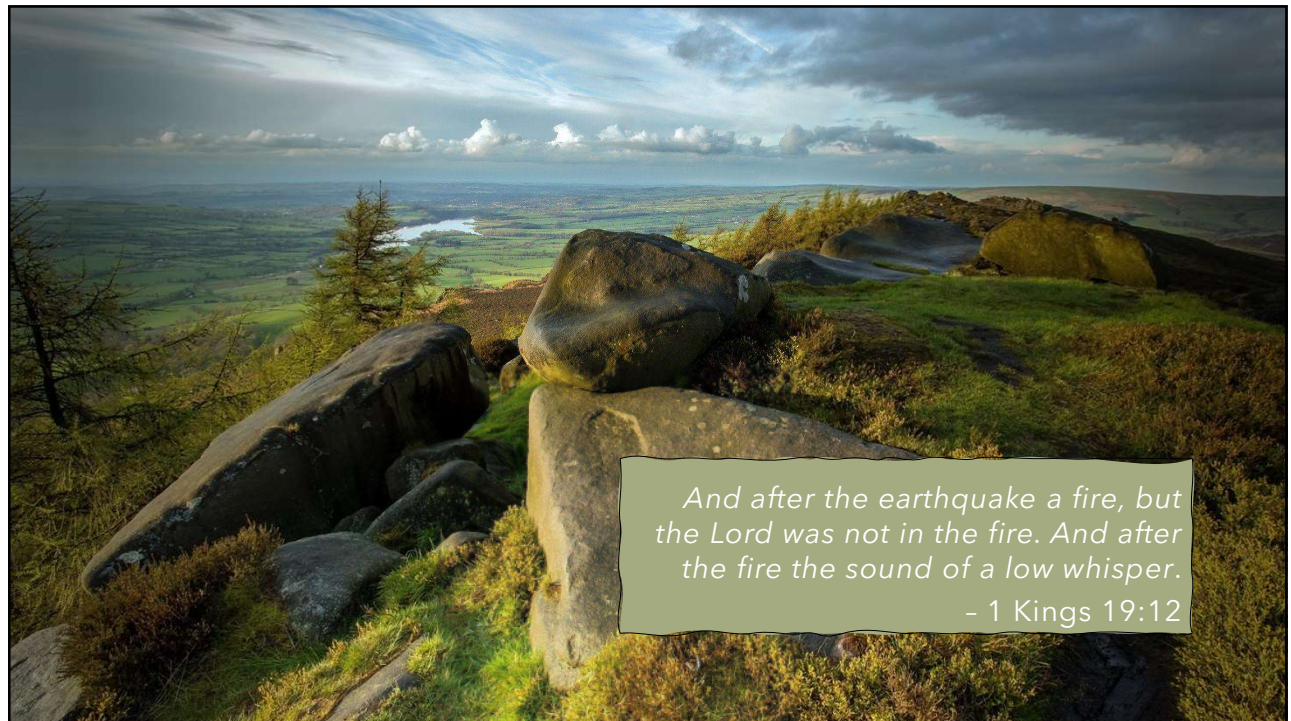
By Henri Nouwen titled:
Letting God of All Things,
Sojourners, May 1979.

"Prayer is the act by which we divest ourselves of all false belongings and become free to belong to God and God alone."

32

FOURTH MOVEMENT

33



34



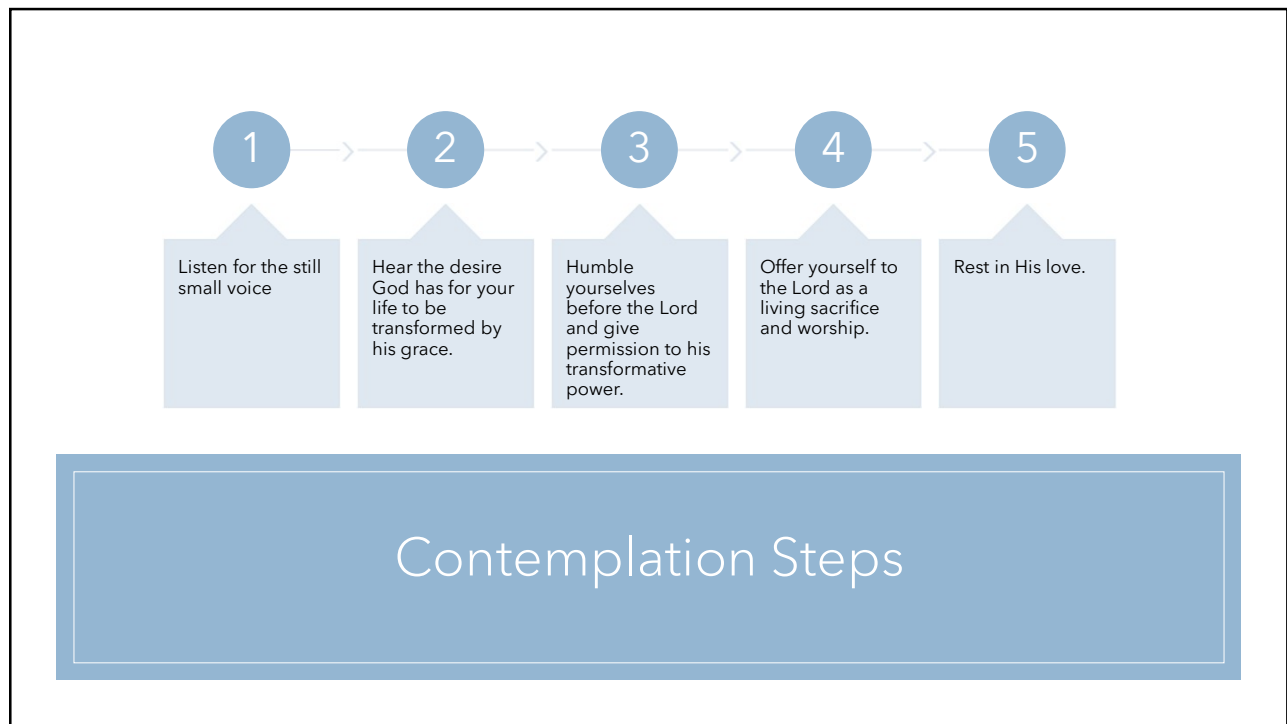
CONTEMPLATION

- Rest in God
- It is God who transforms the person
- Listen for the still small voice

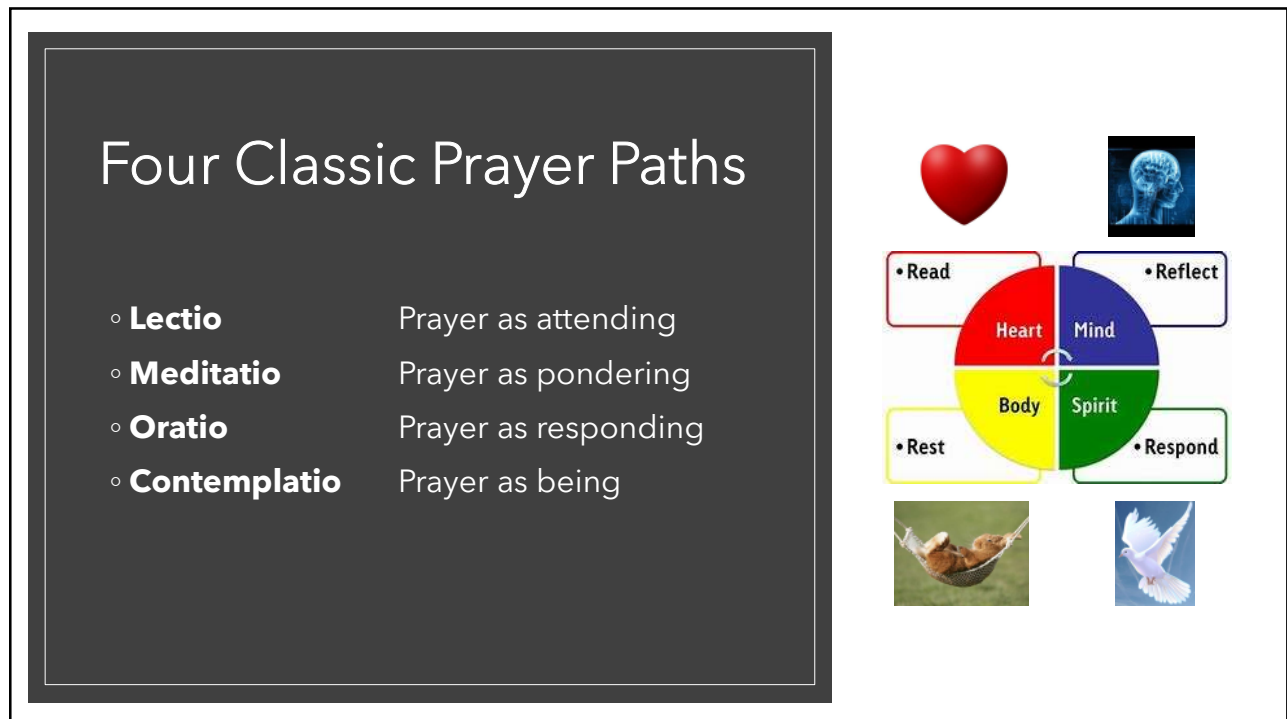
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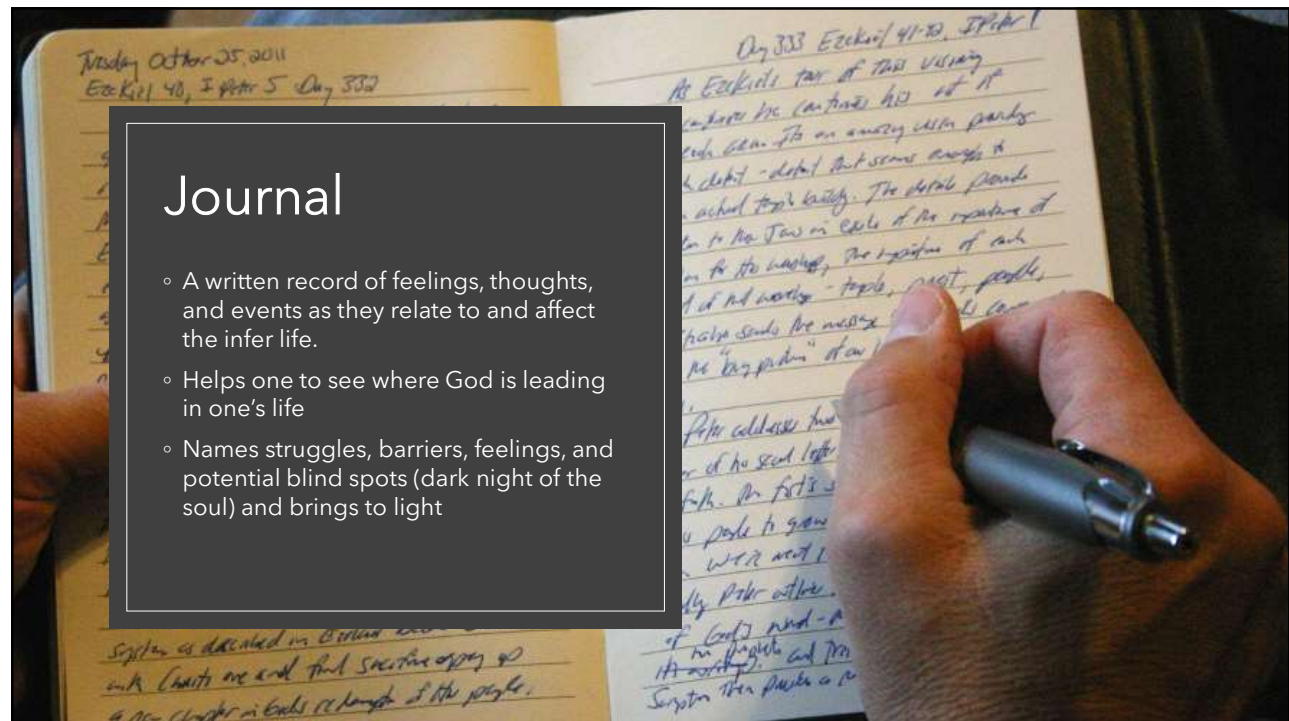


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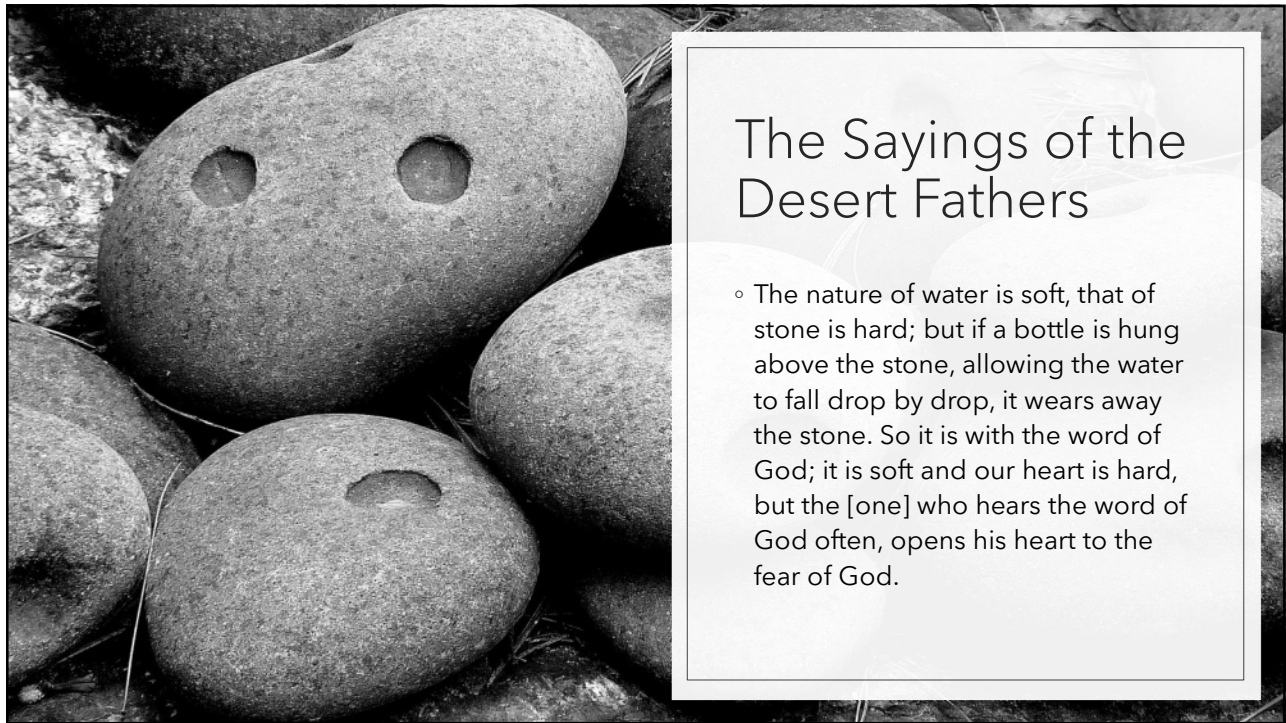
FIFTH MOVEMENT

Journaling

39



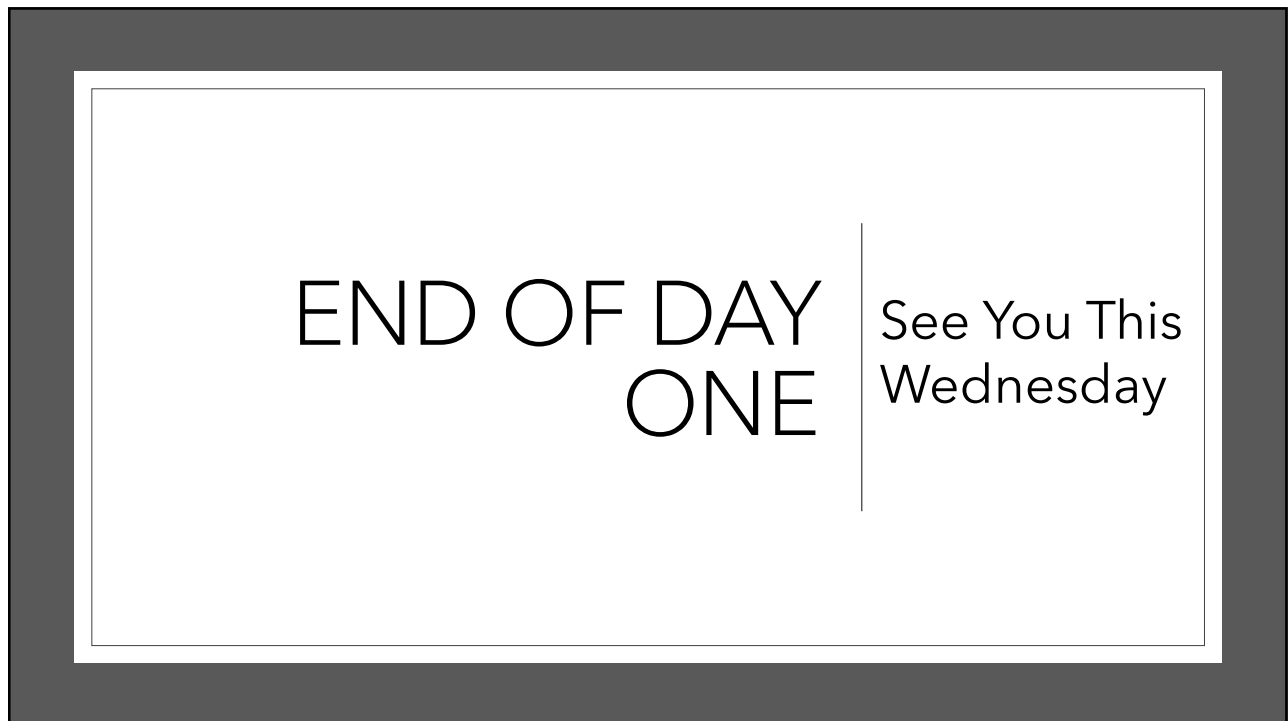
40



The Sayings of the Desert Fathers

- The nature of water is soft, that of stone is hard; but if a bottle is hung above the stone, allowing the water to fall drop by drop, it wears away the stone. So it is with the word of God; it is soft and our heart is hard, but the [one] who hears the word of God often, opens his heart to the fear of God.

41



42

Brief Individual *Lectio Divina*

- Schedule daily time for *Lectio Divina* (Recommend 20-minutes)
- Find a sacred space that offers silence and solitude
- Prepare yourself by relaxing and opening with a breath prayer
- Start reading in the Book of Psalms (6 to 8 verses)
- Read Scripture slowly a number of times through noticing a word or phrase (four minutes)
- Meditate (four minutes)
- Pray (four minutes)
- Contemplate (four minutes)
- Journal (four minutes)

43

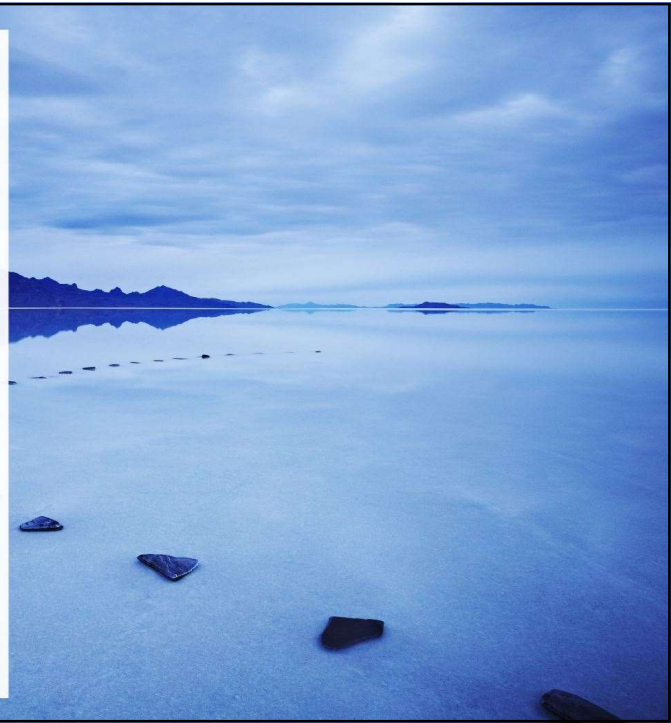


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APPENDIX E

LESSON PLAN PART II SESSION 2 SLIDE DECK



1



2

CONTENT

SESSION I (MONDAY)

Complementary Modalities

- Mindfulness
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- *Lectio Divina*

“Noticing” Exercise

Lectio Divina

- Reading / Listening
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Contemplation
- ADDED: Journaling

SESSION II (WEDNESDAY)

Check-In

Session 1 Review

Individual *Lectio Divina*

- Four Movements – As Prayers
- Four Movements – As Metaphors

Group *Lectio Divina*

- Facilitator Role
- Participant Role
- Demonstration
- Practice

Visio Divina & Audio Divina

- Depending on Time

Follow-up

3

CHECK-IN

Things you may want to share with your group or accountability partner:

- My Daily *Lectio Divina* time with God is going: _____.

- One area that is going well with practicing *Lectio Divina* is: _____.

- One barrier I face with practicing *Lectio Divina* is: _____.

- Overall I would like to share: _____.



4

Hypothesis:

If an individual is battling with a soul wound, practicing ***Lectio Divina*** will reduce the bio-psycho-social-spiritual wounds, offer a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope, with a potential for redemption and reconciliation in the Triune God.

5



The Sayings of the Desert Fathers

- The nature of water is soft, that of stone is hard; but if a bottle is hung above the stone, allowing the water to fall drop by drop, it wears away the stone. So it is with the word of God; it is soft and our heart is hard, but the [one] who hears the word of God often, opens his heart to the fear of God.¹

6

Brief Individual *Lectio Divina*

- Schedule daily time for *Lectio Divina* (Recommend 20-minutes)
- Find a sacred space that offers silence and solitude
- Prepare yourself by relaxing and opening with a breath prayer
- Start reading in the *Book of Psalms* (6 to 8 verses)
- Read Scripture slowly for at least three times through noticing a word or phrase (four minutes)
- Meditate (four minutes)
- Pray (four minutes)
- Contemplate (four minutes)
- Journal (four minutes)

7

SESSION TWO

DIVINA LIVING

8

INDIVIDUAL *LECTIO DIVINA*

Practice Makes Better

9

Four *Lectio Divina* Movements – As Prayer

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| ◦ Lectio | Prayer as Attending | Social |
| ◦ Meditatio | Prayer as Pondering | Psycho |
| ◦ Oratio | Prayer as Responding | Spiritual |
| ◦ Contemplatio | Prayer as Being | Bio |
| ◦ Journaling | Prayer as Sharing | Soul |



10

Four *Lectio Divina* Metaphors

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." (Romans 8:26)

Become Attentive. Let go of distractions. Be present to God, in Christ.

First reading: Head

What does the Holy Spirit draw your attention to – what word or phrase resonates? Notice it and pray it back to God.

Second reading: Heart

What is going on inside you as you sit with whatever you noticed? What are you *feeling* as the Holy Spirit stirs God's word deep into your soul? Notice it, and talk with God about it.

Third reading: Habit

(from Latin "*habitus*", character) How might whatever you're noticing reflect what the Holy Spirit is praying in you and for you? What is God calling you to, in being or in doing?

Rest: [Hiatus]

Rest in God's arms, "*like a weaned child with its mother*" (Psalm 131:2), enjoying his loving embrace.

developed for the Pierce Center for Disciple-Building,
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
© 2005 Susan Porterfield Currie

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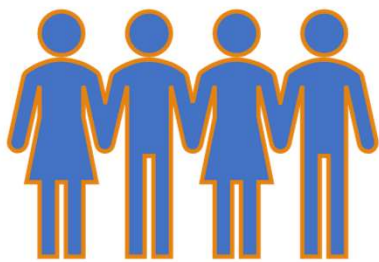
GROUP LECTIO DIVINA

Practice Makes Better

12

FACILITATOR ROLE & PARTICIPANT ROLE

13

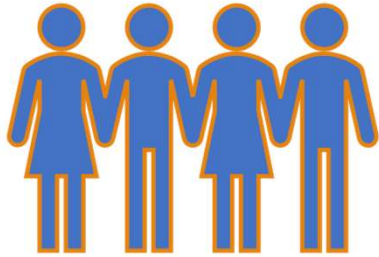


GROUP PREPARATION

FACILITATOR

- Center Down
- Breath Prayer
- Read Scripture
- Group Inquire

14



GROUP PREPARATION

PARTICIPANTS

- Following Instructions
- Sit Silently
- Speak when it is Your Turn
- Pray when it is Your Turn

15

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

Center Down

Facilitator: (Read the following words aloud and slowly)

- Find a comfortable place to sit in solitude and silence.
- I invite you to sit in silence with your eyes closed.
- With your back straightened up, your weight completely resting where you sit, allowing your body to relax as best as possible.
- As you breath, focus on the rhythm of your breathing.

16

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

Breath Prayer

Facilitator: (Read the following words aloud and slowly)

- I invite you to say a prayer as you breathe in and out.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you with calming your body, mind, and spirit.
- I encourage you to lay all your concerns at this moment in the hands of God.
- Ask the Father to surround you with his love and presence.

17

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

SCRIPTURE: *Psalm 23*

Facilitator: (Read the following words aloud and slowly)

The first time I read, listen to the Word of God for a word or phrase that touches you.

18

PSALM 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

19

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

SCRIPTURE: *Psalm 23*

Participants:

- Participants sit in silence with eyes closed listening to the Scripture being read aloud and allowing the Holy Spirit to help them notice a word or phrase for their spiritual journey.
- **Facilitator:** (After a brief pause, read the Scripture passage aloud again, slowly.)

20

PSALM 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

21

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

SCRIPTURE: *Psalms* 23

- Reading of the Psalm a Second Time.
 - Before the reading the facilitator will:
 - ☐ invite the participants to listen to the Word of God for a word or phrase
 - After the reading the facilitator will:
 - ☐ encourage them to share in the group their word or phrase

Please keep phrase to no more than three words

22

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

SCRIPTURE: *Psalms 23*

Facilitator: (Ask the group to repeat to themselves [silently] the word or phrase that touched them. Allow one minute of silence. After silence, say the following:)

Let us share our word or phrase.

(Facilitator will then begin by sharing aloud their word or phrase.)

23

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

SCRIPTURE: *Psalms 23*

Participants:

- After the Facilitator shares their word, the participants are encouraged to share as they feel able their word or phrase.
- **Facilitator:** (After all have been given an opportunity to share, read the Scripture passage aloud one final time.)

24

PSALM 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

25

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

SCRIPTURE: *Psalms* 23

- Reading of the Psalm a Third Time.
 - Before the reading the facilitator will:
 - ☐ invite the participants to listen to the Word of God for a word or phrase
 - After the reading the facilitator will:
 - ☐ encourage them to share in more detail in the group about their word or phrase

26

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

SCRIPTURE: *Psalms* 23

Facilitator: (Ask the group to repeat to themselves [silently] the word or phrase that touched them. Allow one minute of silence. After silence, say the following:)

Let us share in more detail about our word or phrase.

(Facilitator will then begin by sharing.)

27

GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA* DEMONSTRATION

SCRIPTURE: *Psalms* 23

Participants:

- After the Facilitator shares, the participants are encouraged to share as they feel able about their word or phrase.
- **Facilitator:** (After all have been given an opportunity to share, request each person pray aloud one at a time, for their neighbor. Facilitator will start.) (Left or Right)

28

GROUP LECTIO DIVINA EXERCISE

Practice Makes Better

29

GROUP EXERCISE **SCRIPTURE: *Psalm 4***

Facilitator: Ken Hellmer

Participants: Our Cohort

Psalm 4:1-8

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!
You have given me relief when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?

But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself;
the Lord hears when I call to him.

Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your
beds and be silent. Offer right sacrifices and put your trust in
the Lord.

There are many who say, "Who will show us some good?
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!"

You have put more joy in my heart
than they have when their grain and wine abound.

In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

30

BREAK OUT GROUPS

31

Psalm 16:1-6

Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

Participant 1: Group Leader
Participant 2: Group Member
Participant 3: Group Member
Participant 4: Group Member

32



33

Connecting and Growing with the Triune God

READ
**LECTIO
DIVINA**

LISTEN
**AUDIO
DIVINA**

LOOK
**VISIO
DIVINA**

34



AUDIO DIVINA

35

Majesty

*Is 2A.
Arranged*

AUDIO DIVINA

Majesty

By Jack Hayford

36



37



38



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Lectio Divina Journal

One-Week Exploration



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Hello,

My name is Ken Hellmer and I would like to personally thank you for joining me on this amazing adventure! I pray you find *Lectio Divina* offers you a deeper intimate communion with the Father, your soul passionately in love with the Son, and your faith invigorated by the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of this study is to offer anyone who is struggling or grappling with anxiety, anger, fear, loneliness, meaninglessness, hopelessness, sadness, shame, stress, pain, or distress, an opportunity for reducing symptoms listed above by providing a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope in God through learning and practicing the art of *Lectio Divina*.

Before you begin your one-week exploration with *Lectio Divina*, you will find it helpful to consider wounded areas in your life you might want to open up and release in the hand of God for His healing and renewing.

- 1) In what specific wound areas of your life would you like to apply using *Lectio Divina*?

- 2) What would you ultimately like to receive from God with practicing *Lectio Divina*?

Are you ready to start your one-week exploration with *Lectio Divina*?

(Items listed below need to be completed prior to beginning the one-week program)

- ☐ Agreed and Signed the Informed Consent form.
- ☐ Completed the 70 question Pretest – *Healing Balm for the Soul Wound*.
- ☐ Completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) assessment – *Global Step I*.
- ☐ Scheduled your 1 ½ hour Spiritual Direction / MBTI appointment with Ken Hellmer.
- ☐ Completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) assessment

PREPARE – Silence / Solitude

- Find a quiet place so you are not distracted.
- Sit in silence with your eyes closed.
- Let your weight rest beneath you.
- Imagine any stress, anxiety, or tension leaving your body as you relax and concentrate on your breathing.
- Say a simple breath prayer as you breathe.
- As you sit in silence and solitude ask the Holy Spirit to open the Scriptures.
- As you invite the Triune God into your presence, ask God for his presence and protection.
- Present your concerns to God by seeing yourself laying them at the feet of Jesus.

LECTIO – Read / Listen | **Psalm 1:1–6**

Read/Listen to the Scripture at least three times. Listen for a word or phrase. Write down your word or phrase and anything else you hear and remember.

MEDITATIO – Meditate

Carefully consider the passage and listen for the inner message of Scripture. Allow the passage to connect to your personal life. As you meditate, journal your thoughts, feelings, what you hear, feel, and see as you dialog with God.

ORATIO – Pray

Share your thoughts, feelings, hurts, joys about this encounter with God. Write out a prayer to God regarding areas of your life that need a special touch or healing from Him.

CONTEMPLATIO - Contemplate

Rest in the loving arms of your Heavenly Father as He shares with you.

PREPARE – Silence / Solitude

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LECTIO – Read / Listen | **Psalm 8:1–9**

Read/Listen to the Scripture at least three times. Listen for a word or phrase. Write down your word or phrase and anything else you hear and remember.

MEDITATIO – Meditate

Carefully consider the passage and listen for the inner message of Scripture. Allow the passage to connect to your personal life. As you meditate, journal your thoughts, feelings, what you hear, feel, and see as you dialog with God.

ORATIO – Pray

Share your thoughts, feelings, hurts, joys about this encounter with God. Write out a prayer to God regarding areas of your life that need a special touch or healing from Him.

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LECTIO – Read / Listen | **Psalm 91:1–16**

Read/Listen to the Scripture at least three times. Listen for a word or phrase. Write down your word or phrase and anything else you hear and remember.

MEDITATIO – Meditate

Carefully consider the passage and listen for the inner message of Scripture. Allow the passage to connect to your personal life. As you meditate, journal your thoughts, feelings, what you hear, feel, and see as you dialog with God.

ORATIO – Pray

Share your thoughts, feelings, hurts, joys about this encounter with God. Write out a prayer to God regarding areas of your life that need a special touch or healing from Him.

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- Present your concerns to God by seeing yourself laying them at the feet of Jesus.

LECTIO – Read / Listen | **Psalm 103:1–22**

Read/Listen to the Scripture at least three times. Listen for a word or phrase. Write down your word or phrase and anything else you hear and remember.

MEDITATIO – Meditate

Carefully consider the passage and listen for the inner message of Scripture. Allow the passage to connect to your personal life. As you meditate, journal your thoughts, feelings, what you hear, feel, and see as you dialog with God.

ORATIO – Pray

Share your thoughts, feelings, hurts, joys about this encounter with God. Write out a prayer to God regarding areas of your life that need a special touch or healing from Him.

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- As you sit in silence and solitude ask the Holy Spirit to open the Scriptures.
- As you invite the Triune God into your presence, ask God for his presence and protection.
- Present your concerns to God by seeing yourself laying them at the feet of Jesus.

LECTIO – Read / Listen | **Psalm 139:1–24**

Read/Listen to the Scripture at least three times. Listen for a word or phrase. Write down your word or phrase and anything else you hear and remember.

MEDITATIO – Meditate

Carefully consider the passage and listen for the inner message of Scripture. Allow the passage to connect to your personal life. As you meditate, journal your thoughts, feelings, what you hear, feel, and see as you dialog with God.

ORATIO – Pray

Share your thoughts, feelings, hurts, joys about this encounter with God. Write out a prayer to God regarding areas of your life that need a special touch or healing from Him.

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- Say a simple breath prayer as you breathe.
- As you sit in silence and solitude ask the Holy Spirit to open the Scriptures.
- As you invite the Triune God into your presence, ask God for his presence and protection.
- Present your concerns to God by seeing yourself laying them at the feet of Jesus.

LECTIO – Read / Listen | **Psalm 147:1–20**

Read/Listen to the Scripture at least three times. Listen for a word or phrase. Write down your word or phrase and anything else you hear and remember.

MEDITATIO – Meditate

Carefully consider the passage and listen for the inner message of Scripture. Allow the passage to connect to your personal life. As you meditate, journal your thoughts, feelings, what you hear, feel, and see as you dialog with God.

ORATIO – Pray

Share your thoughts, feelings, hurts, joys about this encounter with God. Write out a prayer to God regarding areas of your life that need a special touch or healing from Him.

CONTEMPLATIO - Contemplate

Rest in the loving arms of your Heavenly Father as He shares with you.

Resources:

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- Houston, James M. *The Transforming Power of Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship with God*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1996.
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- St. Benedict of Nursia. *The Rule of St. Benedict*. Collegeville, MN: Vintage Spiritual Classics, 1998.
- Thomas, Gary. *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.

Objectives:

By the end of the one-week 5-Day exploration you should be able to:

1. Name the four movements of *Lectio Divina* and the importance of journaling.
2. Identify three characteristics of each of the four movements of *Lectio Divina*.
3. Understand the difference between individual *Lectio Divina* and group *Lectio Divina*.
4. Practice *Lectio Divina* with minimal assistance or help.
5. Find a renewed joy in connecting with God, self, and others.

Rev. Ken Hellmer, M.Div., BCC
President
MBTI® Certified Practitioner

Transformational Living, Inc.

Our Mission:

To offer sacred opportunities for spiritual transformation of individuals, and groups.

P: (207) 595-1415

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Website: www.TransformationalLiving.org

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APPENDIX G

LECTIO DIVINA PRETEST

***** Please read the following informed consent form and check the box to proceed. *****

INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title: Healing Balm for the Soul Wound

Principal Investigator: Rev. Ken Hellmer, President, Transformational Living, Inc.

PURPOSE

This is a pilot study. The purpose of this pilot study is to offer participants struggling or grappling with anxiety, anger, fear, loneliness, meaninglessness, hopelessness, sadness, shame, stress, pain, or distress, an opportunity for reducing symptoms listed above by providing a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope through learning and practicing the art of *Lectio Divina*.

Moreover, it has been noticed many individuals desire complementary and alternative medicine or integrative medicine modalities, both for treatment and for the promotion of wellness as *Lectio Divina* is a complementary therapy.

The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. You may ask any questions about the study, what you will be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear.

I am inviting you to participate in this research study because you might be dealing with one or more symptoms listed above, are looking for a complementary therapy, and are open to participating in *Lectio Divina* that consists of reading Christian Scripture, meditation, prayer, contemplation, and journaling.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, your involvement will last for one week. You will attend two two-hour group Zoom video sessions, one 30-minute group Zoom video session, complete a pretest and a posttest, participate in group interaction, practice daily individual assigned *Lectio Divina* with journaling about your daily experience, your thoughts, your feelings, and your emotions. Submit on day five your daily journal highlights from your personal *Lectio Divina* practice. Groups will be conducted via Zoom conference connection that will be sent to you through your email.

The following procedures are involved in this study.

ONE-WEEK PROGRAM

Prior To Day 1

- Complete Pretest
- Complete Myers-Briggs Type Indicator | Global Step I

Day 1 (Monday)

- Attend 2-hour *Lectio Divina* Session
- Individual *Lectio Divina* practice and Journaling (20 Minutes)

Day 2 (Tuesday)

- Individual *Lectio Divina* practice and Journaling (20 Minutes)

Day 3 (Wednesday)

- Attend 2-hour *Lectio Divina* Session
- Individual *Lectio Divina* practice and Journaling (20 Minutes)

Day 4 (Thursday)

- Individual *Lectio Divina* practice and Journaling (20 Minutes)

Day 5 (Friday)

- Attend 30-Minute Debrief Session
- Complete Posttest and Submit Daily Journal Highlights

RISKS

The possible risks associated with participating in this research project are as follows: Discomfort may be associated with the questions in this survey. You may temporarily feel uncomfortable, sad, anxious, or distressed. The researcher has utilized vetted and published scales to help reduce potential risks or cause harm. As with any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified. If you experience any distress as a result of taking this survey, you may contact the CRISIS LINE at 1 (800) 273-8255.

BENEFITS

The potential personal benefits that may occur as a result of your participation in this study are: A feeling of hopefulness, an awareness of encouragement, a recognition of joy, a sense of meaning and purpose for living. In addition, the researcher anticipates that, in the future, society may benefit from this study by providing evidence-based research with the efficacy of *Lectio Divina*.

COMPENSATION

You will not be compensated for participating in this research project. However, the *Lectio Divina* course offered in this pilot project is valued at \$250.00 per participant. In addition, project includes the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator | Global Step I assessment and spiritual direction.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records of participation in this research project will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Participants will use an assigned subject identification number to endure confidentiality

of participated personal information and only principal investigator and support team will have access to information. In the event of any report or publication from this study, your identity will not be disclosed. Results will be reported in a summarized manner in such a way that you cannot be identified.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you agree to participate in this study, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to take part, or if you stop participating at any time, your decision will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled.

QUESTIONS

Questions are encouraged. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact the principal investigator, Rev. Ken Hellmer; (207) 595-1415 or email info@transformationalliving.org. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Dr. David Currie, at: dcurrie@gordonconwell.edu.

By checking this box and proceeding with the survey, you are stating:

☐ I have read this form or have had it read to me, that I am satisfied and understand this form, the research study, and its risks and benefits.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important.

To protect the confidentiality of participant's survey responses all will create a unique subject identification number. This subject identification number is created by using your personal information: first initial of first name, first initial of middle name (if applicable), first initial of last name, and four-digit birth month and day.

Example for subject identification number (Subject ID):

Participant Name: Jane E. Doe (FML)

Date of Birth: 03/22 (MM/DD)

Subject ID: JED0322

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your age?
 - 18-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55-64
 - 65-74
 - 75+
2. What is your gender?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Other (please specify)
3. What is your race? (select all that apply)
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Other (please specify)
4. What is your religion?
 - Buddhism
 - Christianity
 - Judaism
 - Hinduism
 - Islam
 - Other (please specify)

5. What is your marital status?
- Single (never married)
 - Married
 - Married but currently separated
 - Divorced and not currently married
 - Divorced and remarried

GENERAL *LECTIO DIVINA* PRACTICE

6. How familiar are you with the practice of Prayer?
- Not at all familiar
 - Not so familiar
 - Somewhat familiar
 - Very familiar
 - Extremely familiar
7. How familiar are you with the practice of Meditation?
- Not at all familiar
 - Not so familiar
 - Somewhat familiar
 - Very familiar
 - Extremely familiar
8. How familiar are you with the practice of Contemplation?
- Not at all familiar
 - Not so familiar
 - Somewhat familiar
 - Very familiar
 - Extremely familiar

9. How familiar are you with the ancient Christian practice of *Lectio Divina*?
- Not at all familiar
 - Not so familiar
 - Somewhat familiar
 - Very familiar
 - Extremely familiar
10. At this moment of time, practicing *Lectio Divina* has been helpful in my life with meaning, purpose, and hope?
- Don't know
 - Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Somewhat
 - Quite a bit
11. At this moment, reading Scripture has been helpful in my life with meaning, purpose, and hope?
- Don't know
 - Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Somewhat
 - Quite a bit

THE RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL STRUGGLES SCALE

At times in life many people experience struggles, concerns, or doubts regarding spiritual or religious issues. Over the last month, to what extent have you had each of these experiences listed below?

There are no right or wrong answers; the best answer is the one that most accurately reflects your experience.

12. Felt as though God had let me down.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

13. Felt angry at God.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

14. Felt as though God had abandoned me.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

15. Felt as though God was punishing me.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

16. Questioned God's love for me.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

17. Felt tormented by the devil or evil spirits.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

18. Worried that problems I was facing were the work of the devil or evil spirits.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

19. Felt attacked by the devil or by evil spirits.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

20. Felt as though the devil (or an evil spirit) was trying to turn me away from what was good.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

21. Felt hurt, mistreated, or offended by religious/spiritual people.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

22. Felt rejected or misunderstood by religious/spiritual people.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

23. Felt as though others were looking down on me because of my spiritual beliefs.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

24. Had conflicts with other people about religious/spiritual matters.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

25. Felt angry at organized religion.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

26. Wrestled with attempts to follow my moral principles.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

27. Worried that my actions were morally or spiritually wrong.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

28. Felt torn between what I wanted and what I knew was morally right.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

29. Felt guilty for not living up to my moral standards.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

30. Questioned whether life really matters.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

31. Felt as though my life had no deeper meaning.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

32. Questioned whether my life will really make any difference in the world.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

33. Had concerns about whether there is any ultimate purpose to life or existence.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

34. Struggled to figure out what I really believe about religion/spirituality.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

35. Felt confused about my religious/spiritual beliefs.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

36. Felt troubled by doubts or questions about religion or spirituality.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

37. Worried about whether my beliefs about religion/spirituality were correct.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

DUKE UNIVERSITY RELIGION INDEX

38. How often do you attend church or other religious meetings? (ORA)

- Never
- Once a year or less
- A few times a year
- A few times a month
- Once a week
- More than once/week

39. How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation, or Bible study?

- Rarely or never
- A few times a month
- Once a week
- Two or more times/week
- Daily
- More than once a day

The following section contains 3 statements about religious belief or experience. Please mark the extent to which each statement is true or not true for you.

40. In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine (i.e., God).

- Definitely not true
- Tends not to be true
- Unsure
- Tends to be true
- Definitely true of me

41. My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.

- Definitely not true
- Tends not to be true
- Unsure
- Tends to be true
- Definitely true of me

42. I try hard to carry my religion over into all other dealings in life.

- Definitely not true
- Tends not to be true
- Unsure
- Tends to be true
- Definitely true of me

THE ATTACHMENT TO GOD INVENTORY

The following statements concern how you feel about your relationship with God. We are interested in how you generally experience your relationship with God, not just in what is happening in that relationship currently. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral / Mixed			Agree Strongly

43. I worry a lot about my relationship with God.

44. I just don't feel a deep need to be close to God.

45. If I can't see God working in my life, I get upset or angry.

46. I am totally dependent upon God for everything in my life.

47. I am jealous at how God seems to care more for others than for me.

48. It is uncommon for me to cry when sharing with God.

49. Sometimes I feel that God loves others more than me.

50. My experiences with God are very intimate and emotional.

51. I am jealous at how close some people are to God.

52. I prefer not to depend too much on God.

53. I often worry about whether God is pleased with me.

54. I am uncomfortable being emotional in my communication with God.

55. Even if I fail, I never question that God is pleased with me.

56. My prayers to God are often matter of fact and not very personal.

57. Almost daily I feel that my relationship with God goes back and forth from "hot" to "cold."

58. I am uncomfortable with emotional displays of affection to God.

59. I fear God does not accept me when I do wrong.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral / Mixed			Agree Strongly

60. Without God I couldn't function at all.
61. I often feel angry with God for not responding to me when I want.
62. I believe people should not depend on God for things they should do for themselves.
63. I crave reassurance from God that God loves me.
64. Daily I discuss all of my problems and concerns with God.
65. I am jealous when others feel God's presence when I cannot.
66. I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life.
67. I worry a lot about damaging my relationship with God.
68. My prayers to God are very emotional.
69. I get upset when I feel God helps others but forgets about me.
70. I let God make most of the decisions in my life.

That concludes your pretest examination. Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this groundbreaking pilot project.

APPENDIX H

LECTIO DIVINA POSTTEST

***** POSTTEST *****

** Please read the following informed consent form and check the box to proceed. **

INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title: Healing Balm for the Soul Wound

Principal Investigator: Rev. Ken Hellmer, President, Transformational Living, Inc.

PURPOSE

CONGRATULATIONS! This is your final mission with completing the weeklong *Lectio Divina* pilot study excursion. Thank you for your participation and support. The purpose of this consent form ensures you have all the necessary information needed with completing this posttest and in case you have any last-minute questions about the study you participated in, or anything else about the research or this form that is not clear.

Again, thank you for participating in this research study.

PROCEDURES

This is your final task. Please follow the guidance, complete the posttest, submit your daily journal highlights from your personal *Lectio Divina* practice.

RISKS

The possible risks associated with the final posttest are as follows: Discomfort may be associated with the questions in this survey. You may temporarily feel uncomfortable, sad, anxious, or distressed. The researcher has utilized vetted and published scales to help reduce potential risks or cause harm. As with any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified. If you experience any distress as a result of taking this survey, you may contact the CRISIS LINE at 1 (800) 273-8255.

BENEFITS

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COMPENSATION

You will not be compensated for participating in this research project. However, the *Lectio Divina* course offered in this pilot project is valued at \$250.00 per participant. In addition,

project includes the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator | Global Step I assessment and spiritual direction.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records of participation in this research project will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Participants will use an assigned subject identification number to endure confidentiality of participated personal information and only principal investigator and support team will have access to information. In the event of any report or publication from this study, your identity will not be disclosed. Results will be reported in a summarized manner in such a way that you cannot be identified.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you agree to participate in this study, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to take part, or if you stop participating at any time, your decision will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled.

QUESTIONS

Questions are encouraged. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact the principal investigator, Rev. Ken Hellmer; (207) 595-1415 or email info@transformationalliving.org. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Dr. David Currie, at: dcurrie@gordonconwell.edu.

By checking this box and proceeding with the survey, you are stating:

☐

I have read this form or have had it read to me, that I am satisfied and understand this form, the research study, and its risks and benefits.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important.

To protect the confidentiality of participant's survey responses all will create a unique subject identification number. This subject identification number is created by using your personal information: first initial of first name, first initial of middle name (if applicable), first initial of last name, and four-digit birth month and day.

Example for subject identification number (Subject ID):

Participant Name: Jane E. Doe (FML)

Date of Birth: 03, 22, 1995 (MM/DD)

Subject ID: JED0322

In addition to consent of the SurveyMonkey Posttest _____ (participant) was contacted via phone to confirm consent on _____ (date) and agrees to participate in the pilot project for *Lectio Divina*.

RESEARCHER STATEMENT

I have discussed the above points with the participant. It is my opinion that the participant understands the risks, benefits, and procedures involved with participation in this research study.

(Signature of Researcher)

(Date)

CONGRATULATIONS for successfully completing the 5-day *Lectio Divina* Pilot Project. Please respond to the following six questions about your experience with this week's *Lectio Divina* participation in mind:

GENERAL *LECTIO DIVINA* PRACTICE

1. How familiar are you with the practice of Prayer?
 - Not at all familiar
 - Not so familiar
 - Somewhat familiar
 - Very familiar
 - Extremely familiar
2. How familiar are you with the practice of Meditation?
 - Not at all familiar
 - Not so familiar
 - Somewhat familiar
 - Very familiar
 - Extremely familiar
3. How familiar are you with the practice of Contemplation?
 - Not at all familiar
 - Not so familiar
 - Somewhat familiar
 - Very familiar
 - Extremely familiar
4. How familiar are you with the ancient Christian practice of *Lectio Divina*?
 - Not at all familiar
 - Not so familiar
 - Somewhat familiar
 - Very familiar
 - Extremely familiar

5. At this moment of time, practicing *Lectio Divina* has been helpful in my life with meaning, purpose, and hope?
- Don't know
 - Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Somewhat
 - Quite a bit
6. At this moment, reading Scripture has been helpful in my life with meaning, purpose, and hope?
- Don't know
 - Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Somewhat
 - Quite a bit

THE RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL STRUGGLES SCALE

At times in life many people experience struggles, concerns, or doubts regarding spiritual or religious issues. Over the week practicing *Lectio Divina*, to what extent have you had each of the twenty-six experiences listed below?

There are no right or wrong answers; the best answer is the one that most accurately reflects your experience.

7. Felt as though God had let me down.
- Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Somewhat
 - Quite a bit
 - A great deal
8. Felt angry at God.
- Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Somewhat
 - Quite a bit
 - A great deal

9. Felt as though God had abandoned me.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

10. Felt as though God was punishing me.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

11. Questioned God's love for me.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

12. Felt tormented by the devil or evil spirits.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

13. Worried that problems I was facing were the work of the devil or evil spirits.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

14. Felt attacked by the devil or by evil spirits.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

15. Felt as though the devil (or an evil spirit) was trying to turn me away from what was good.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

16. Felt hurt, mistreated, or offended by religious/spiritual people.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

17. Felt rejected or misunderstood by religious/spiritual people.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

18. Felt as though others were looking down on me because of my spiritual beliefs.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

19. Had conflicts with other people about religious/spiritual matters.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

20. Felt angry at organized religion.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

21. Wrestled with attempts to follow my moral principles.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

22. Worried that my actions were morally or spiritually wrong.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

23. Felt torn between what I wanted and what I knew was morally right.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

24. Felt guilty for not living up to my moral standards.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

25. Questioned whether life really matters.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

26. Felt as though my life had no deeper meaning.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

27. Questioned whether my life will really make any difference in the world.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

28. Had concerns about whether there is any ultimate purpose to life or existence.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

29. Struggled to figure out what I really believe about religion/spirituality.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

30. Felt confused about my religious/spiritual beliefs.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

31. Felt troubled by doubts or questions about religion or spirituality.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

32. Worried about whether my beliefs about religion/spirituality were correct.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

THE ATTACHMENT TO GOD INVENTORY

The following statements concern how you feel about your relationship with God. We are interested in how you generally experience your relationship with God, especially on what is happening in that relationship currently with practicing *Lectio Divina*. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral / Mixed			Agree Strongly

33. I worry a lot about my relationship with God.
34. I just don't feel a deep need to be close to God.
35. If I can't see God working in my life, I get upset or angry.
36. I am totally dependent upon God for everything in my life.
37. I am jealous at how God seems to care more for others than for me.
38. It is uncommon for me to cry when sharing with God.
39. Sometimes I feel that God loves others more than me.
40. My experiences with God are very intimate and emotional.
41. I am jealous at how close some people are to God.
42. I prefer not to depend too much on God.
43. I often worry about whether God is pleased with me.
44. I am uncomfortable being emotional in my communication with God.
45. Even if I fail, I never question that God is pleased with me.
46. My prayers to God are often matter of fact and not very personal.
47. Almost daily I feel that my relationship with God goes back and forth from "hot" to "cold."
48. I am uncomfortable with emotional displays of affection to God.
49. I fear God does not accept me when I do wrong.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral / Mixed			Agree Strongly




50. Without God I couldn't function at all.
51. I often feel angry with God for not responding to me when I want.
52. I believe people should not depend on God for things they should do for themselves.
53. I crave reassurance from God that God loves me.

- 54. Daily I discuss all of my problems and concerns with God.
- 55. I am jealous when others feel God's presence when I cannot.
- 56. I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life.
- 57. I worry a lot about damaging my relationship with God.
- 58. My prayers to God are very emotional.
- 59. I get upset when I feel God helps others but forgets about me.
- 60. I let God make most of the decisions in my life.

That concludes your posttest examination. Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this groundbreaking pilot project.

APPENDIX I

MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR GLOBAL STEP 1 PROFILE

	 MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR® GLOBAL STEP 1™ PROFILE
	Prepared for Participant Sample
	October 15, 2020
	Interpreted by Rev. Ken Hellmer, M.Div., BCC Pilot Study Transformational Living, Inc.
 The Myers-Briggs Company +1 800 624 1765 www.themyersbriggs.com	
<small>Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® Global Step 1™ Profile Copyright 1998, 2004, 2015, 2018 by Peter B. Myers and Katharine D. Myers. All rights reserved. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Myers-Briggs, MBTI, Step 1, the MBTI logo, and The Myers-Briggs Company logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of The Myers & Briggs Foundation in the United States and other countries.</small>	



PROFILE

MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR® | GLOBAL STEP 1™

Participant Sample

ISTJ | 2



Your Myers-Briggs® Profile is designed to help you understand your results on the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®)* assessment. This assessment identifies which of 16 different personality types best describes you.

Your answers to the questions on the MBTI assessment show which preference in each of four pairs of opposites you favor. Your preferences are choices between equally valuable and useful qualities. Each preference is indicated by a letter.

Your Myers-Briggs personality type
ISTJ

Your preferences
Introversion | Sensing | Thinking | Judging

THE WAY YOU DIRECT AND RECEIVE ENERGY

Extraversion

People who prefer Extraversion tend to direct their energy toward the outside world and get energized by interacting with people and taking action.



Introversion

People who prefer Introversion tend to direct their energy toward their inner world and get energized by reflecting on their ideas and experiences.

THE WAY YOU TAKE IN INFORMATION

Sensing

People who prefer Sensing tend to take in information that is real and tangible. They focus mainly on what they perceive using the five senses.



Intuition

People who prefer Intuition tend to take in information by seeing the big picture. They focus mainly on the patterns and interrelationships they perceive.

THE WAY YOU DECIDE AND COME TO CONCLUSIONS

Thinking

People who prefer Thinking typically base their decisions and conclusions on logic, with accuracy and objective truth the primary goals.



Feeling

People who prefer Feeling typically base their decisions and conclusions on personal and social values, with understanding and harmony the primary goals.

THE WAY YOU APPROACH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Judging

People who prefer Judging typically come to conclusions quickly and want to move on, and take an organized, planned approach to the world.



Perceiving

People who prefer Perceiving typically look for more information before coming to conclusions and take a spontaneous, flexible approach to the world.

TYPE DESCRIPTION: ISTJ

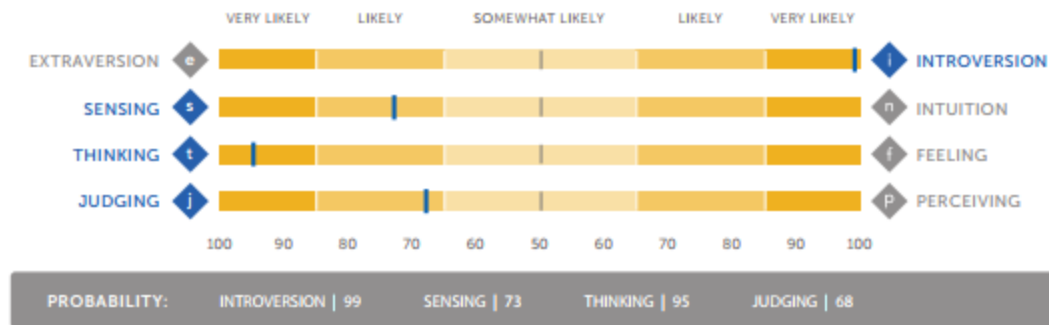


- Dependable, practical, sensible, realistic
- Responsible and loyal to organizations, family, relationships
- Absorb, remember, and use facts carefully and accurately
- Value procedures, structure, and schedules
- Want roles and responsibilities to be clearly defined
- Make objective decisions based on logic; use past experience to solve problems
- Seen as calm, serious, orderly, traditional

Some of these descriptors may not fit you because you are a unique person. Although most ISTJs have personality attributes in common, there are still plenty of individual differences among people who share the same four-letter type.

Your MBTI responses indicate not only your preferences, but also the probability that your reported preferences really do fit you. The graph below shows the probability index for each of your preferences. The closer the blue marker is to a preference, the greater the probability that the preference describes you well. The probability index does not measure how much of a preference you have or how well you use that preference. It simply shows how likely it is that the preference you reported is accurate for you.

PROBABILITY INDEX FOR EACH OF YOUR MBTI® PREFERENCES



Each of the Myers-Briggs types is characterized by its own interests, values, and unique gifts. Although each individual tends to use his or her preferences most naturally and most often, keep in mind that everyone can and does use *all* of the preferences from time to time, depending on what the situation calls for. For a more complete understanding of the 16 different personality types, refer to the *Introduction to Myers-Briggs® Type* booklet by Isabel Briggs Myers or to the many other MBTI resources that are available.

APPENDIX J

LECTIO DIVINA QUARTERLY REPORT MARCH 2022

MARCH, APRIL, & MAY 2022

Total Participation for the Quarter: **2418**

Daily Average Participants for the Quarter: **38**

Offered **63** Lectio Divina Sessions / Low: **29** Daily Attendance / High: **54** Daily Attendance

MARCH 2022

Lectio Divina Sessions

DATE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
1 Mar 2022	40
2 Mar 2022	42
3 Mar 2022	45
4 Mar 2022	39
7 Mar 2022	43
8 Mar 2022	54
9 Mar 2022	43
10 Mar 2022	49
14 Mar 2022	35
15 Mar 2022	52
17 Mar 2022	45
18 Mar 2022	31
21 Mar 2022	47
22 Mar 2022	44
23 Mar 2022	34
24 Mar 2022	37
25 Mar 2022	44
28 Mar 2022	45
29 Mar 2022	37
30 Mar 2022	32
31 Mar 2022	39

Total Participation for the month of March: 877

Average Participants for the month of March: 42 daily

21 Lectio Divina Sessions / Low: 31 High: 54

APRIL 2022
Lectio Divina Sessions

DATE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
1 Apr 2022	35
4 Apr 2022	36
5 Apr 2022	35
6 Apr 2022	34
7 Apr 2022	37
8 Apr 2022	37
11 Apr 2022	42
12 Apr 2022	42
13 Apr 2022	42
14 Apr 2022	38
15 Apr 2022	41
18 Apr 2022	37
19 Apr 2022	37
20 Apr 2022	37
21 Apr 2022	38
22 Apr 2022	33
25 Apr 2022	38
26 Apr 2022	35
27 Apr 2022	39
28 Apr 2022	32
29 Apr 2022	29

Total Participation for the month of April: 774
Average Participants for the month of April: 37 Daily
21 Lectio Divina Sessions / Low: 29 High: 42

MAY 2022
Lectio Divina Sessions

DATE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
2 May 2022	36
3 May 2022	33
4 May 2022	34
5 May 2022	37
6 May 2022	38
9 May 2022	30
10 May 2022	38
11 May 2022	37
12 May 2022	37
13 May 2022	39
16 May 2022	42
17 May 2022	34
18 May 2022	41
19 May 2022	40
20 May 2022	35
23 May 2022	33
24 May 2022	31
25 May 2022	41
26 May 2022	38
27 May 2022	36
31 May 2022	37

Total Participation for the month of May: 767
Average Participation for the month of May: 37 Daily
21 Sessions / Low: 30 High: 42

APPENDIX K

PROJECT 1 PARTICIPANTS

Participant ID 1#1

This participant self-identified as a Christian married white male between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported he was quite familiar the spiritual practices of prayer and meditation. He was somewhat familiar with contemplation and *Lectio Divina*. He found reading Scripture provided him with a great deal of meaning and purpose. However, he reported practicing *Lectio Divina* offered him with some help currently. He has experienced at least one soul wound in his lifetime with a debilitating soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 1#2

This participant self-identified as a Christian married white male between the ages of 65-74. Individual reported he possessed a great deal of familiarity with prayer, had quite a bit of familiarity with meditation, and contemplation. Being somewhat familiar with *Lectio Divina*, he currently found reading Scripture offered him a great deal of meaning and purpose and practicing *Lectio Divina* offered quite a bit of support. He has experienced at least one soul wound in his lifetime with a severe soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 1#3

This participant self-identified as a Christian married white female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she possessed a great deal of familiarity with prayer, had somewhat of familiarity with meditation, contemplation, and *Lectio Divina*. She noted she found reading Scripture offered her a great deal of meaning and purpose and practicing *Lectio Divina* offered quite a bit of support. She was unavailable to respond to the soul wounding assessment section.

Participant ID 1#4

This participant self-identified as a Christian married white male between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported he possessed a great deal of familiarity with prayer, meditation, and contemplation. Being somewhat familiar with *Lectio Divina*, he currently found reading Scripture offered him a great deal of meaning and purpose; however, practicing *Lectio Divina* offered a little bit of support. He has experienced at least one soul wound in his lifetime with a severe soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 1#5

This participant self-identified as a Christian married black male between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported he possessed a great deal of familiarity with prayer, meditation, and contemplation. Being somewhat familiar with *Lectio Divina*, he currently found reading Scripture offered him quite a bit of meaning and purpose. In addition, he shared practicing *Lectio Divina* provided him somewhat support with meaning and purpose. He has experienced at least one soul wound in his lifetime with a moderate soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 1#6

This participant self-identified as a Christian married Hispanic female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she had a great deal of familiarity with prayer, had quite a bit of experience with meditation, contemplation, but was only somewhat familiar with *Lectio Divina*. She shared that Scripture reading offered her a great deal of meaning and purpose and found *Lectio Divina* offered her somewhat support. She was unavailable to respond to the soul wounding assessment section.

Participant ID 1#7

This participant self-identified as a Christian married, but currently separated white male between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported he had a great deal familiarity with the spiritual practices of prayer, quite a bit of experience with meditation, somewhat familiar with contemplation, and had no familiarity with *Lectio Divina*. He found reading Scripture provided him with a great deal of meaning and purpose. However, he reported practicing *Lectio Divina* offered him little support. He was unavailable to respond to the soul wounding assessment section.

Participant ID 1#8

This participant self-identified as a Christian married white female between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported she had a great deal of familiarity with prayer, had quite a bit of experience with meditation, and was somewhat familiar with contemplation and *Lectio Divina*. She reported Scripture reading offered her a great deal of meaning and purpose and found *Lectio Divina* offered her quite a bit of support. She has experienced at least one soul wound in her lifetime with a severe soul wounding severity level.

APPENDIX L

PROJECT 2 PARTICIPANTS

Participant ID 2#1

This participant self-identified as a Christian white female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was very familiar with *Lectio Divina* and practiced daily. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2020 through February 2021. She has experienced more than five soul wounds in her lifetime with a moderate soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#2

This participant self-identified as a Christian white female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2020 through February 2021. She has experienced more than five soul wounds in her lifetime with a moderate soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#3

This participant self-identified as a Christian white male between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported he was not so familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. He reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. He has experienced three to five soul wounds in his lifetime with a minor soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#4

This participant self-identified as a Christian black female between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported she was somewhat familiar with *Lectio Divina* and practiced daily. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2022 through May 2022. She perceives that she has not experienced any soul wounds in her lifetime.

Participant ID 2#5

This participant self-identified as a Christian white female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and practiced daily. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2020 through February 2021. She elected to not respond to the soul wound assessment questions.

Participant ID 2#6

This participant self-identified as a Christian white male between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported he was somewhat familiar with *Lectio Divina* and practiced less than once a month. He reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2020 through February 2021. He has experienced two soul wounds in his lifetime with a moderate soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#7

This participant self-identified as a Christian Black female between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February

2022. She has experienced three to five soul wounds in her lifetime with a severe soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#8

This participant self-identified as a Christian white female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2022 through May 2022. She has experienced one soul wound in her lifetime with a severe soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#9

This participant self-identified as a Christian black female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. She has experienced more than five soul wounds in her lifetime with a severe soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#10

This participant self-identified as a Christian black female between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported she was very familiar with *Lectio Divina* and practiced daily. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2022 through May 2022. She has experienced three to five soul wounds in her lifetime with a moderate soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#11

This participant self-identified as a Christian black female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was extremely familiar with *Lectio Divina* and practiced daily. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. She has experienced one soul wound in her lifetime with a moderate soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#12

This participant self-identified as a Christian black female between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. She has experienced two soul wounds in her lifetime with a minor soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#13

This participant self-identified as a Christian white female between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2020 through February 2021. She has experienced more than five soul wounds in her lifetime with a minor soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#14

This participant self-identified as a Christian black female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was extremely familiar with *Lectio Divina* and practiced daily. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2022 through May 2022. She has experienced more than five soul wounds in her lifetime with a moderate soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#15

This participant self-identified as a Christian black female between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported she was not so familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. She has experienced one soul wound in her lifetime with a minor soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#16

This participant self-identified as a Christian white female between the ages of 65+. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2020 through February 2021. She perceives that she has not experienced any soul wounds in her lifetime.

Participant ID 2#17

This participant self-identified as a Christian white female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was somewhat familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February

2022. She has experienced three to five soul wounds in her lifetime with a severe soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#18

This participant self-identified as a Christian Asian male between the ages of 35-44. Individual reported he was somewhat familiar with *Lectio Divina* and practiced daily. He reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. He has experienced three to five soul wounds in his lifetime with a debilitating soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#19

This participant self-identified as a Christian white Hispanic female between the ages of 25-34. Individual reported she was extremely familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. She perceives that she has not experienced any soul wounds in her lifetime.

Participant ID 2#20

This participant self-identified as a Christian white female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was not so familiar with *Lectio Divina* and practiced a few times a month. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. She has experienced one soul wounds in her lifetime with a minor soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#21

This participant self-identified as a Christian Hispanic female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2020 through February 2021. She perceives that she has not experienced a soul wound in her lifetime.

Participant ID 2#22

This participant self-identified as a Christian black female between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2022 through May 2022. She perceives that she has not experienced a soul wound in her lifetime.

Participant ID 2#23

This participant self-identified as a Christian white female between the ages of 45-54. Individual reported she was not so familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. She has experienced more than five soul wounds in her lifetime with a severe soul wounding severity level.

Participant ID 2#24

This participant self-identified as a Christian black female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She

reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. She perceives that she has not experienced a soul wound in her lifetime.

Participant ID 2#25

This participant self-identified as a Christian white female between the ages of 55-64. Individual reported she was not at all familiar with *Lectio Divina* and did not practice. She reported attending the *Lectio Divina* MS Teams group starting March 2021 through February 2022. She has experienced two soul wounds in her lifetime with a moderate soul wounding severity level.

APPENDIX M

PROJECT 1 & 2 – SOUL WOUND SEVERITY ASSESSMENT

Project 1

My district asked if I would be willing to lead a church that was in crisis; over a million in debt. After three-years the district decided to take a different direction and I was basically asked to leave. I really felt like the district abandoned me. Eventually I was able to get a job at a medical facility do some part-time. I did not blame the church but having to leave I felt that God did not come through the way I expected him to. I felt disillusioned; thought God was going to show up and felt that he didn't. It was very difficult for me to move on. It took years and years to build my faith back up. It wasn't God, but the district that gave up on me. I still think it impacts me today; trusting when I pray, believing. God has been faithful over and over again. Had to work on what I expected God to do and what really happened. It was a debilitating wound. The grace of God allowed me to continue with ministry. There was no good solution to the problem.¹

I had bouts of loneliness living and ministering in a foreign country. I was ready to quit, and it was my kids that made me stay. It was a very dark loneliness. I wasn't sure if it was a soul wound, but in order for me to go back, it would have to be an audible voice telling me to go. The ministry of the Lord brought me out of it. Different people respond to challenges like that and I don't even know if I am healed from it yet. At the time it felt severe. It equipped me spiritually eventually. What helped me was stories of other missionaries that went through difficult times. Reading what other missionaries went through helped me and those stories became what I would take out and read and take comfort.²

I live a rough homelife, my relationship with father was very rough, a very abusive person. My father had a love affair with the military. I had to process bitterness and forgiveness to achieve reconciliation with my father.³

Growing up with a family member who was physically and mentally abusive. You're worthless, you're ugly and you're useless. Still fearful of this person today and try to avoid him.⁴

¹ Project 1 Participant ID1#1, Follow-up Focus Group; June 6, 2022.

² Project 1 Participant ID1#4, Follow-up Focus Group; June 6, 2022.

³ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Follow-up Focus Group; June 6, 2022.

⁴ Project 1 Participant ID1#8. Follow-up Focus Group; June 6, 2022.

Project 2

I was laid off from a job that I excelled at for several years. My supervisor had it out for me even though we had won national awards. They hired their own in my place, less qualified. My ex-team has suffered because of this, and many have left the organization. It makes me sad for everyone but mostly the patients because patient care has been compromised.⁵

I have recently been divorced and I have received a lot of healing from the Lord through scripture and prayer for the past couple of years as I have gotten through that time in my life. Other wounds from my childhood have also surfaced that I am now able to focus my attention on.⁶

First soul wound, my brother making constant fun of me, physically hurting me, making me feel worthless, like I didn't matter. Second, was infertility, where my body betrayed me, and I felt like the Lord betrayed me. Third, was being touched sexually by a chiropractor.⁷

Years ago in my young years I separated from God believing that he did not love me because of all the bad things that were happening in my life. I thank and praise God that, that part of my life didn't last long.⁸

I have daily challenges that come up as I am surrounded by non-believers in my work group. Having this prayer time helps strengthen me so I do not slide backwards into Satan's grasp. Trying to stay away from the gossip in the office, the negative thoughts and actions of others, and the frequent cursing our Savior that I am often exposed to.⁹

Got lots of challenges and God blessings in return. One situation my sister and I were attacked, she nearly died during emergency surgery. I prayed for her healing and mine because I was traumatized. The robbery attack was in broad day light in a grocery store parking lot stopped while entering the store entrance. She survived after a lot of after care and the attacker was never caught.¹⁰

Lateral violence at the workplace.¹¹

⁵ Project 2 Participant ID2#1, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 22, 2022.

⁶ Project 2 Participant ID2#2, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁷ Project 2 Participant ID2#3, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁸ Project 2 Participant ID2#4, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁹ Project 2 Participant ID2#5, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁰ Project 2 Participant ID2#6, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹¹ Project 2 Participant ID2#8, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

I blamed God for a death that happened to someone I loved very deeply. I turned away from God and had a lot of anger and resentment. I stopped going to church and reading my Bible. I was in a very dark place.¹²

I was verbally and mentally abused by an ex and then came to work at a medical facility where it started happening all over again but this time coming from my supervisor and persons in leadership. Even after those people were removed, I was still ill at-ease everyday coming to work. I constantly felt like I would be attacked again and developed physical conditions because of the constant depression.¹³

One soul wound resulted from a broken marriage; the other was the result of guilt over my letting GOD down.¹⁴

People calling themselves Christians but doing worldly unchristian like things to me.¹⁵

I grew up with a very abusive older brother. I was, and still am, afraid of him. He has anger issues and is a classic narcissist. He enjoyed bullying me my whole life - verbally, emotionally, and physically. When I was younger, I did not feel worthy of living. I started to believe the words my brother spewed at me daily. I actually contemplated suicide.¹⁶

¹² Project 2 Participant ID2#9, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹³ Project 2 Participant ID2#10, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁴ Project 2 Participant ID2#11, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁵ Project 2 Participant ID2#13, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁶ Project 2 Participant ID2#15, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

APPENDIX N

PROJECT 1 – DAILY JOURNAL ENTRIES

Day 1 Responses

I need a deeper relationship with Jesus.¹

At the moment it would be infertility and the journey of embryo adoption. I have experienced two miscarriages earlier in our marriage. Recently we've sought fertility treatment with no pregnancy thus far. Peace, rest, confidence, and depth in spiritual identity. Really whatever God has for me.²

1) Family relationships to include immediate and extended family. Letting go of past family taboos about family origin-biological father. 2) Consistency in my prayer life and discipline in reading and meditating on God's word.³

Hearing the Word in Repetition 3 times opened my eyes more to the passage. This is a new practice for me to read the same scripture multiple times.⁴

I would like to use Lectio Divina when anxiety arises, and also when I am feeling down. I would like to continue to have the closeness with Jesus, and the peace that only He can give me!⁵

Day 2 Responses

Psalms 1: The Lord says to me what is your delight? what do you delight in each day? Allow me to be your delight. My word, my Son and my promises shall be your delight meditate on these things.⁶

The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous. Lord, help me to be righteous. Foundation/source: What we allow our hearts to tap into or drink from feeds us or finishes us. What I allow my heart to tap into feeds or nourishes me. I must be wise because somethings deprive and starve us spiritually and emotionally. God, show me, lead me, place the desire within me to crave & delight in Your Word, wisdom and ways.⁷

¹ Project 1 Participant ID1#2, Journal Responses; October 22, 2020.

² Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

³ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

⁴ Project 1 Participant ID1#7, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

⁵ Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 31, 2020.

⁶ Project 1 Participant ID1#1, Journal Responses; October 20-22, 2020.

⁷ Project 1 Participant ID1#2, Journal Responses; October 22, 2020.

Scripture: Ps.1. Lectio: Blessed the man. Meditatio: This is an individualized focus - not the family, community, or nation, but the man. The man who does not associate with the wicked, sinners, and scoffers in order to become like them. They love evil, violate the law, and exude an attitude that scoffs at godly things. Rather, the man, like a healthy tree planted by fresh water he immerses himself in God. The man finds delight in God's revelation. The source of water brings joy and life. The sources restrains the man's struggle against with sin and doubt. Oratio: O Lord, let you joy overflow to my mind, heart and body. Connected to You I have joy and it cures my fears, worry, and stress. The blessing of the world, nation, community, and family begins with the blessed man who delights in Your revelation - day and night. Help me Lord.⁸

Lect> [sic] Meditating on God, on God's word is like a tree planted by rivers of water, and it produces fruit, and its leaves do not wither. Meditatio> [sic] My soul is nourished and is healthy when I spend time in relationship with the Lord. Oratio> [sic] Eternal God, I give you my mind, body, spirit and emotions to you. I delight myself in you and in your word. I accept your health, healing and wholeness. Contemplatio> [sic] ⁹

Psalm 1:1-6 Lectio: Delight is in the law of the Lord. Meditatio: I hear God telling me that I am blessed because I walk with God and continue to delight and meditate in the word day and night. Like a tree, I am nourished through the stream of God's Word. I enjoy guided meditation, music, breathing, but I am challenged to go deeper in the Word of God, and God will speak to my soul what my next steps are. Oratio: Oh God, this year has been a challenging year in which I found myself in many storms. The waves were strong and, at times, unbearable. I know that I wasn't alone, and you were with me. I thank you because I felt you carrying me through. I pray for your healing touch because there are times my soul is sorrowful. Your word has brought me strength. Contemplatio: I see you always close to me, especially at night. I sense your wings covering me completely, which brings me peace, especially when fear and anxiety are real.¹⁰

I am learning a new skill and my world is crashing on me. I needed this experience and practice for my own personal sanity. LD forces me to slow the pace of my devotion.¹¹

Psalm 1 1-6. He is healthy, like the tree planted by streams of water, he does not wither! Prosper....the wicked are like chaff, the wind blows away, tossed. I think of the world and what is going on today. The wicked will not survive the

⁸ Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

⁹ Project 1 Participant ID1#4, Journal Responses; October 23, 2020.

¹⁰ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

¹¹ Project 1 Participant ID1#7, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

judgement. They need Jesus so badly. The protestors don't know the peace. When I think of the wicked, it strikes terror in my heart for their souls. If only they would wake up. Lord, my heart breaks for the lost. They follow their own feelings and hurts, that is their god. They do not know Your peace, SHALOM. Give us peace in these tumultuous times, In Jesus name!¹²

Day 3 Responses

How excellent is His name above all the earth. Lord help me to consider You-- Your works, Your Word, Your ways, and Your Name.¹³

Lord/dominion God invites us to join Him. He has dominion over everything, including us. Yet, He shares this with us by allowing/inviting us to have dominion over creation, His handy work. This is care and enjoyment, nurture. It is not a conquering, but a ruling in a way that absorbs responsibility. It is stewardship. Dominion is to ensure that nurture happens. In the past my father was to be an example of strength and nurture. He failed, but God never will fail, He is always about ensuring and nurturing legacy.¹⁴

Scripture: Ps. 8 Lectio: What is man? Meditatio: What is man? He is so small, insignificant compared to the majesty of creation. Yet you have crowned him with glory and honor. As God's glory is set above the heavens, this creates the environment of freedom to exercise the will. The enemies of Yahweh will to rebel but instead of crushing them as He could, He uses the humble things of the world to defeat them. The praise of infants and the temporary weakness of humanity He will use to defeat the strong foes. O Yahweh how majestic is your Name! Oratio: The enemies I fear which God allows to do what they wish for a time, will be humbled by the humble things. What am I that You think about my situation, "yet" He knows about me. He has filled me with confidence and peace because He rules. I desire Your rule of God in my life and in the universe. I have peace in that. That you for your reassuring peace.¹⁵

Lectio> [sic] How majestic is God's name in all the earth. Meditate> [sic] God has endowed his dignity and respect towards humankind and are called to be stewards for He has entrusted to us. God cares and honors me in such a way that I can participate and partner in God's redemption and creation. Oratio> [sic] Lord,

¹² Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 31, 2020.

¹³ Project 1 Participant ID1#2, Journal Responses; October 22, 2020.

¹⁴ Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

¹⁵ Project 1 Participant ID1#4, Journal Responses; October 23, 2020.

in my finiteness and humanness, you accept me as your own child and crown me with dignity and respect.”¹⁶

Psalm 8:1-9 Lectio: When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers. Meditatio: When I see and experience nature, I feel so alive and know that you exist and are available for each of us. I love the sunset, moon, ocean, and beautiful skies. Oh God, you are majestic, all-powerful, and know my every thought. I'm glad I can share anything and everything with you. I know that your love is unconditional, and that brings joy and peace to my soul. I hear you speaking to my soul daily and embrace each word. Oratio: Oh God, I know you are calling me to a deeper relationship; help me be attentive to your Word. I want to embrace your Word daily and share it with others on the journey. Please help me to heal within and depend on you for that inner healing. Contemplatio: I'm never alone even though I miss my husband very much. I know that you are always with me. I will live one day at a time. Thank you for being my guide.¹⁷

I had some major technology issues. My phone kept freezing up and this caused me to miss lots of the discussion. My world is insanely busy. Civilian occupation loss of FEE CH¹⁸, I have been appointed to Integrated Ethic Program Officer, increase work at civilian job, preparing for National Guard Drill, (I need to do PT) preparing for my son's wedding in 2 weeks, my garden is still producing, my dog has puppies, and 2 different groups have asked me to help with special projects. Stress has a way of stealing scared space and time.¹⁹

Tuesday, Psalm 8 1-9 How is it that God loves us so much! What is man that You remember him? I am in total awe when I see the sky at night, and to think that He made it all!! He knows the stars by name. I feel so small. But God knows ME TOO!!! He crowned me with GLORY and HONOR!! Lord, please save my loved ones from Your wrath. I pray they see You and feel Your love before it's too late!²⁰

Day 4 Responses

Psalm 91: The Lord says: rest in my shadow, do not look to other things, people, experiences, or securities to be Your refuge and strength.²¹

¹⁶ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

¹⁷ Project 1 Participant ID1#6, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

¹⁸ A Fee Basis Chaplain receives remuneration per individual service provided in the VA.

¹⁹ Project 1 Participant ID1#7, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

²⁰ Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 31, 2020.

²¹ Project 1 Participant ID1#1, Journal Responses; October 20-22, 2020.

He is my refuge. In Him will I trust. He will show me my salvation. God, help me to rest in You, my refuge.²²

Shelter, dwelling place, salvation. God is my shelter. Abiding/trusting Him becomes my dwelling place of salvation because I am hidden in Him. I rest in God and have shelter from troubles/adversity. It doesn't stop adversity from entering my life, but in God I have protection, and rest no matter the circumstance. God thank you that I am not alone in walking through this time of uncertainty. Help me to rest in You, my shelter.²³

Scripture: Ps. 91 Lectio: dwells and dwelling place. Meditatio: Dwells = "hold fast to Me in love" "because you have made the LORD your dwelling place, "because he holds fast to ME in love". The Lord does many things for the one who dwells in the love of God. Protection from evil doers (fowlers), illness, disease, terrors in the night (real or imagined), pestilence and natural disasters, dangers in battle, also the seven "I wills" at the end of the chapter: I will: deliver, protect, answer, be with in trouble, rescue, and honor, bestow long life, show salvation. Oratio: O Lord - great peace awaits those whose minds love you by dwelling in You. My wondering mind can venture away from its proper dwelling place and so loses the peace and security of dwelling in You. Let my mind stay upon You. Help me to love you with all my mind.²⁴

Lectio> [sic] Most High as my dwelling -- my refuge and strength (condition) no harm will befall me (promise). Meditate> [sic] In the midst of this pandemic, we have a divine protective covering. My responsibility is to be wise and protect myself and claim the divine covering of the most High. Oratio> Most Holy and Divine - I praise You for your divine protection in the midst of this rampant pestilence.²⁵

Psalms 91:1-16 Lectio: My refuge and fortress Meditatio: I hear you speaking to my soul and telling me to call on you, and you will answer. It brings great comfort that you will answer my plead; you will deliver me when in trouble. I know that you know that I love you, and you will rescue me from every single storm that comes to my life. I also know that I will not feel your presence at times, but I will trust that you will always make way for me. Oratio: Oh dear God, sometimes many fears and anxiety try to take over, but I am thankful that I am learning to depend totally on you. When those difficult times come, I am placing all my fears and anxiety in your hands. It feels freeing to know that I am not alone that you are always with me. I need to live today to the fullness and trust that you will guide my every step. Contemplatio: Dear God, I hear you clearly telling me to trust and

²² Project 1 Participant ID1#2, Journal Responses; October 22, 2020.

²³ Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

²⁴ Project 1 Participant ID1#4, Journal Responses; October 23, 2020.

²⁵ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

fear not; I see you are walking with me on my journey. Thank you for being my refuge and fortress. I am not alone.²⁶

Reading Praying and Reflecting. I ran out of time for deep contemplation. I did not slow down enough to Contemplate and listen to God.²⁷

Wednesday Psalm 91:1-16 Protection.....I will deliver him, I will protect him. Stay UNDER His protection, and dwell in the shadow of the Almighty!! We have nothing to fear if we stay under the protection and peace of God. He will sustain us and protect us! I am so thankful to God for His love and protection to me, and my family all these years!²⁸

Day 5 Responses

Bless the Lord! Bless the Lord--Oh my soul, all ye His hosts, Ye ministers of His, All His Works, Oh my soul. God, help me to see Your worthiness, and bless you, Oh, my soul.²⁹

Steadfast love God's love is steadfast, not fleeting. Circumstances change, fears and emotions shift, days quickly pass, but God will remain faithful forever. God's steadfast love and goodness are mine forever. Throughout my life I have encountered loss, neglect, and abandonment, but no matter the circumstance I am never abandoned by God.³⁰

Scripture: Ps. 103 Lectio: A father shows compassion. Meditatio: "As a father shows compassion toward his children so the LORD show compassion to those who fear him." The five ways our Father shows compassion: he forgives all sin, he heals all diseases, he redeems from the pit, he crowns with love and mercy, he feeds me with good things. All this so my strength is renewed. Oratio: O Lord you respond to me as a Father with compassion. As I fear/respect you and keep your covenant, remember your commands the assurance of your presence fills my heart. We are all messed up kids, help us to focus on you. As a father you take care of us. Thank you for my earthly father who prepared the ground in my heart for me to receive you as a compassionate heavenly father.³¹

²⁶ Project 1 Participant ID1#6, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

²⁷ Project 1 Participant ID1#7, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

²⁸ Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 31, 2020.

²⁹ Project 1 Participant ID1#2, Journal Responses; October 22, 2020.

³⁰ Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

³¹ Project 1 Participant ID1#4, Journal Responses; October 23, 2020.

Lectio> [sic] The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger. Meditate> [sic] Oh the depth and width of the love and grace of God towards me and all God's children. Oratio> [sic] Praise the Lord, oh my soul, mind, emotions, body, and spirit for your incredible and awesome grace that looks beyond my sins and meet all my needs.³²

I did spend 20 minutes sitting at my bar reading reflecting and asking God to give me strength for the task ahead.³³

Thursday, Psalm 103:1 -22. He crowns you with faithful love and compassion. From eternity to eternity, the Lord's faithful love is toward those who fear Him and His righteousness!!! He loves us so much!! He is slow to anger and rich in faithful love!! He knows what we are made of, remembering that we are dust. He is an awesome Abba Father!!! Thank-you Lord, for loving us like You do! You are so worthy of our praise!!!³⁴

Day 6 Responses

Search me; try me; Thou hast searched me. Thou knowest me. Yet, I still ask, "Search me, O God." Search me, O God, and know my heart.³⁵

Know, known, unformed substance, God is my creator. He knows me inside and out. Even the secret areas that others cannot see, God sees and knows me to the utmost. I am always before Him, even before life on earth began for me. And, even after life on earth is passed. God knows my little embryos with the same intimacy, love, and care. God, I hurt in the waiting, but I rejoice in Your love, Your plan, the life You have for me and our baby, even before birth.³⁶

Lectio> [sic] I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Meditate> [sic] God is the master architect and He don't make any junk. I am whole and well in Christ and my self-image is positive and healthy because of the creative hand of God on my life. Oratio> [sic] Thank you, Lord for making me who I am and smiling on me.³⁷

³² Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

³³ Project 1 Participant ID1#7, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

³⁴ Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 31, 2020.

³⁵ Project 1 Participant ID1#2, Journal Responses; October 22, 2020.

³⁶ Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

³⁷ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

My day started at 01:30, I have a 7 hour drive to Louisiana for drill. I plug my iPhone into the truck stereo and listened to the Word of God. I drank a thermos of coffee and listened to a couple of books of the Bible. It struck me without the repetition of going over the scriptures many times I am not retaining the material like doing LD. When I arrived in Monroe LA after 7 hour drive I had to take a PT test. I often reflect and pray as I run. This seems to be a quiet time.³⁸

Friday Psalm 139:1 -24. You have encircled me~ Where can I go to escape Your Spirit?? NO WHERE! "This extraordinary knowledge is beyond me" I love how real King David is, he writes what I feel and think. We are never far from the Lord and His love and protection! "Even the darkness is not dark to You". "Your works are wonderful". Thank-you Lord for knowing every detail about my life, yet You still LOVE me. I am a daughter of the most HIGH GOD!!³⁹

Day 7 Responses

Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to do so. It is good to praise the Lord. He is great. Sing praise and thanksgiving unto Him. Lord, help me to see You in Your goodness and praise You.⁴⁰

He blesses your children within you. Abundant in power. He determines the number of stars. God has not stopped creating, nor has He stopped sustaining His creation. His Word, life, truth, creation, divine power presently completes and fulfills all God intends for it to. God thank You that You are always about Your faithfulness. Your steadfast love doesn't stop it is always growing.⁴¹

Lectio> [sic] The Lord delights in those who fear him who put their hope in his unfailing love. Meditate> [sic] It is not about my ability and competence, skillset or intelligence but rather about honoring and glorifying the Lord Almighty who is the one who gifts me with talents and graces. Oratio> [sic] Gracious Lord and Savior, I praise you for peace, protection and for your unfailing love. I put my trust in you and you alone.⁴²

Sunday of National Guard drill. I feel my need to slow down, exhaustion and pain are constant following the PT test I took yesterday. I tried to encourage and share

³⁸ Project 1 Participant ID1#7, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

³⁹ Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 31, 2020.

⁴⁰ Project 1 Participant ID1#2, Journal Responses; October 22, 2020.

⁴¹ Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

⁴² Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

Peace, but it was really hard. I have a new anxiety, there is Hurricane #7 Zeta headed to Louisiana.⁴³

Saturday Psalm 147:1-20 Thanksgiving!! The Lord values those who fear Him. We need to keep an attitude of gratitude. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He is a very personable God. His understanding is infinite! He will provide everything we need. Lord, help me to always be grateful for what You have blessed me with. Give me patience and peace. Help me to love like You love.⁴⁴

⁴³ Project 1 Participant ID1#7, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

⁴⁴ Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 32, 2020.

APPENDIX O

PROJECT 1 & 2 – HEALING BALM

Project 1 Participants

Yes, all parts of Lectio Divina. Lectio Divina has helped me to trust God more and to help me with forgiveness. It is a life-long process and Lectio Divina definitely is a positive tool.¹

This was an excellent way to grow in understanding of these passages of Scripture, primarily because it allowed time to sit with the Author and sense His message to my heart. Thanks for the opportunity.²

I have enjoyed getting acquainted with Lectio again. I look forward to practicing it again in my walk with God and teaching others how to do the same.³

I really enjoyed the sessions and the whole experience...I really sense a spirit of compadre with the other participants in the study. They all seem to be great people with a heart for the hurting.⁴

This experience has been rich and rewarding to me. I greatly appreciate this spiritual discipline of lectio divina. I look forward to using this practice both in my personal devotion, couple devotions and with groups. Forgiveness and healing over broken trust in relationship⁵

I found my experience enlightening and encouraging me to look within and focus on making more time with God. I believe my prayer life has been challenged in a good way, and I look forward to integrating Lectio Divina daily. I know this time will strengthen my faith and spiritual walk with God. I believe that this project will be very beneficial to many that are open to it. I believe that there are no coincidences, and I felt from God to help my colleague but mostly to help myself. It has been beneficial, and I know it will continue to strengthen the spiritual life that is most important for me. I am learning the importance of prioritizing my self-care to replenish and continue being a blessing to others on the journey.⁶

I had to find forgiveness and be able to offer it. I am hoping to develop this into parts of my spirituality group. Using the 4 parts and teaching the skills.⁷

¹ Project 1 Participant ID1#1, Journal Responses; October 20, 2020.

² Project 1 Participant ID1#2, Journal Responses; October 22, 2020.

³ Project 1 Participant ID1#3, Journal Responses; October 21-23, 2020.

⁴ Project 1 Participant ID1#4, Journal Responses; October 23, 2020.

⁵ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

⁶ Project 1 Participant ID1#6, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

I have learned to slow down and ponder God's word. Lectio helps me to forgive, and also, I write down thoughts and feelings I get from verses.⁸

Project 2 Participants

Lectio Divina has helped me with trust and anger issues I had due to abuses done to me. I have learned the importance of forgiveness - not for the sake of my abusers, but for my sake. Allowing Jesus to wash over all the hurt has been liberating.⁹

When I am able to attend, I find the comradery from other Christians across the nation one that is helpful. Knowing that there are other likeminded co-workers (be it all miles apart), brings me peace. I'm able to put a prayer request out on the site, and I know that there are others who will pray for me.¹⁰

It helps me to place my focus on God while going through each day.¹¹

I'm not sure if I have had an actual "soul wound". Could very well be defined as "life."¹²

I feel that it has helped me to draw closer to GOD.¹³

It has enabled me to have more of an inner peace. I am more settled into my workday and more productive because my focus has improved somewhat.¹⁴

I learned to develop a breath prayer and look within my mind, heart, and soul.¹⁵

Calmness, peace, hope, reassurance, and strength.¹⁶

⁷ Project 1 Participant ID1#7, Journal Responses; October 26, 2020.

⁸ Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 31, 2020.

⁹ Project 2 Participant ID2#1, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁰ Project 2 Participant ID2#2, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹¹ Project 2 Participant ID2#3, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹² Project 2 Participant ID2#4, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹³ Project 2 Participant ID2#6, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁴ Project 2 Participant ID2#7, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁵ Project 2 Participant ID2#8, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁶ Project 2 Participant ID2#9, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

Lot of prayer and meditation.¹⁷

I love helping and being an inspiration to me and others. Because I do understand you have to encourage yourself in the Lord and to be an interceptor for others.¹⁸

It brings peace and tranquility to my day.¹⁹

Some of the wounds were unknown to me before I was reborn. All have improved once I found Jesus! That being said I am constantly attacked by Satan and do struggle at times with my previous sins and while I feel the Holy Spirit within, I still have times that Satan pulls me back. Having this service keeps God alive in me during the stress of work.²⁰

Drawing closer to God, praying, singing, praising, and talking with my Pastor and my Christian group of friends.²¹

It is calming.²²

It relaxes me and makes me focus only on Jesus.²³

It has helped me to get over my depression and anxiety through the reliance of God's Word and meditation on it and prayer.²⁴

Allowed me to get back to the creator, to spend time with Him, allow myself time to communicate with him in a stress filled daily life.²⁵

To be engulfed in word of God.²⁶

¹⁷ Project 2 Participant ID2#10, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁸ Project 2 Participant ID2#11, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁹ Project 2 Participant ID2#12, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²⁰ Project 2 Participant ID2#13, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²¹ Project 2 Participant ID2#14, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²² Project 2 Participant ID2#15, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²³ Project 2 Participant ID2#17, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²⁴ Project 2 Participant ID2#18, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²⁵ Project 2 Participant ID2#20, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²⁶ Project 2 Participant ID2#23, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

Accepting that God has His own plans for me.²⁷

²⁷ Project 2 Participant ID2#25, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

APPENDIX P

PROJECT 1 & 2 – MEANING, PURPOSE, AND HOPE

Project 1: Meaning, Purpose, and Hope

It has been very beneficial in my spiritual journey. I have a closer relationship with Jesus and I look forward to my daily time of fellowship. In today's crazy world, it definitely provides me with hope, meaning and purpose.¹

It has added a meditative/reflective nature to my devotional time.²

Focus on scripture particularly the Psalms - refreshing Word from the Lord provides redemption and reconciliation.³

I feel closer to the Lord, and His presence daily.⁴

Project 2: Meaning, Purpose, and Hope

Participating in Lectio Divina daily allows me to keep my focus on the goodness of God. Nothing else matters. It gives me strength because I know that I am a child of God and that He is with me always.⁵

Knowing that there are others who have or may have experienced similar things in their life is a comfort. As a Christian with many years saved, I know that I, too, can offer kind words to others.⁶

It helps refocus each day.⁷

It reminds me to stop and focus on God.⁸

I'm not sure how to describe it.⁹

¹ Project 1 Participant ID1#1, Journal Responses; October 20, 2020.

² Project 1 Participant ID1#4, Journal Responses; October 23, 2020.

³ Project 1 Participant ID1#5, Journal Responses; October 25, 2020.

⁴ Project 1 Participant ID1#8, Journal Responses; October 31, 2020.

⁵ Project 2 Participant ID2#1, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁶ Project 2 Participant ID2#2, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁷ Project 2 Participant ID2#3, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁸ Project 2 Participant ID2#4, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

⁹ Project 2 Participant ID2#6, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

Being able to meditate on God's word daily and apply it to my everyday life is a blessing. I feel like not only am I improving but my relationship with God is improving with every Lectio Divina I participate in.¹⁰

I have a spiritual family that I feel connected to. They share in my sorrows and join together in prayer. I don't feel alone anymore.¹¹

More awareness in my interactions with others. Practice kindness and forgiveness.¹²

It helps me to keep my mind focused on God and his word.¹³

I wake up thanking God, I pray with my family over our meals, we read the Bible at night together. What was missing is stopping during the craziness of my day and taking a moment to remember God. Having Lectio Divina helps me keep God at the front of my mind.¹⁴

Helps me to focus on God and not the toxic work environment that I am currently in.¹⁵

During the hustle and bustle of the work life, it is nice to be able to stop and reflect on God's word. It helps with being able to carry on in a peaceful manner and not let the outside forces stress you out.¹⁶

It gives me a sense of peace and fellowship (with both Jesus and my fellow prayer warriors) during these stress covid times. Scripture neutralizes all the negative stuff we are bombarded with each day. Praying for others makes me feel I am making a difference to God's people. Lectio Divina is a calming, strengthening oasis in my day that feeds and builds the joy in me that then allows me to nurture more fully the patients and co-workers God puts before me. I am Blessed by it.¹⁷

¹⁰ Project 2 Participant ID2#7, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹¹ Project 2 Participant ID2#8, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹² Project 2 Participant ID2#9, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹³ Project 2 Participant ID2#12, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁴ Project 2 Participant ID2#13, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁵ Project 2 Participant ID2#14, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁶ Project 2 Participant ID2#15, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁷ Project 2 Participant ID2#16, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

By focusing on Jesus, JUST Jesus, and His Word. I am HIS child, and I am precious to Him!¹⁸

It has helped me to focus on God's promises each day and meditate on them consistently.¹⁹

This daily reflection and experience bring me a great sense of purpose and connection by drawing me closer to the Lord and reflect on His Word and what it means to me while being a part of a supportive community.²⁰

Lectio Divina is a constant reminder for me to be intentional in my job bringing hope and positivity with my words and my perspective & reaction to situations. For me Lectio Divina is a tool of evangelism to the coworkers that observe me and respect this moment of reflection, it is comfort for the medical facility employee in the middle of the busyness of work, spiritual recharge, is the present a community of faith. I was so glad the minute I heard of Lectio Divina, as a Christian nurse I was very glad to know that Christianity was finally being openly included as part of whole health. I hope similar tool would be available at some point to the Veterans.²¹

Encouragement in the Word and in fellow believers.²²

God has plans for me that I was unclear of before. He led me back to the medical facility to help our veterans.²³

¹⁸ Project 2 Participant ID2#17, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

¹⁹ Project 2 Participant ID2#18, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²⁰ Project 2 Participant ID2#19, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²¹ Project 2 Participant ID2#21, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²² Project 2 Participant ID2#23, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

²³ Project 2 Participant ID2#25, *Lectio Divina* Focus Group; May 23, 2022.

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